THE TRAVEL DIARY OF A PHILOSOPHER

IN TWO VOLUMES

✦

Volume

2

THE TRAVEL DIARY OF A PHILOSOPHER

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BY

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PART FOUR: TO THE FAR EAST

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IN THE BAY OF BENGAL

After I had only ministered to the mind for many months, my body, impatient of this state of things, resorted to the extremest measures for coming by its due: I was taken seriously ill; I spent the last weeks in India on a bed of sickness. In its way it was no uninteresting period. It is a peculiar experience to feel oneself less as an acting personality, but rather as a scene of action; as the arena in which microbes fight their battles. Besides, one experiences in times of physical debility, psychic transpositions which, as a change, are not unwelcome to me. Traits of my being come into evidence when I am ill which as a rule remain hidden; the feminine aspect gains supremacy, with the result that the world appears in a different, more personal and more friendly light. During such times I am without will, without wishes, and I think of my habitual efforts, which express themselves often so violently, with that gentle, amiable sympathy with which women watch man's unreasonable ambition.

For the time being I am convalescent; this is a condition which always affords me the keenest enjoyment. As a rule, I feel my body as something extraneous, given to the mind as some inalienable matter, without inner connection with myself. But now my mind is completely passive, while the regenerating physical forces are all the more busily at work; and consciousness, now being centred in the body, enjoys the blissful feeling of uninterrupted productiveness.

The small child's sense of happiness may be of this kind. Grown-up individuals know conditions of a similar degree of comfort only during times of physical weakness; the less so, the more they belong to the intellectual type. The theoretically normal psycho-physical equilibrium, in which the centre of consciousness resides midway between the physical and the psychical, so that both seem real in the same sense and degree, is not and cannot be a normal condition for people like ourselves. No matter how different the dimensions are to which

our physical and mental life belongs—it is *one* energy which is expended in both spheres, and where one of them is called upon to meet the highest requirements, the other must necessarily suffer proportionate neglect. It would appear as if Englishmen possessed the secret of combining both achievements, they who are always sportsmen as well as brainworkers. As a matter of fact, it is just they who prove the impossibility of such a union. Their intellectual level, as far as profundity is concerned, is, almost without exception, lower than that of the Germans, for the very reason that their Calocagathia robs their soul of a portion of its contingent potency.

Yes, it does one good to lead a merely bodily existence for a while, to do nothing and to let oneself have things done to one. Such periods signify, moreover, natural reaction to times of intensified mental activity. The Yogis, it is true, assert that one should never relax: a single day during which one's aim is lost out of sight carries one back to a position which one has regarded as already overcome. Undoubtedly they are right in so far as the intention is to traverse finally into other worlds. The man, who, on the other hand, does not mean to lose his normal abilities, but would rather train and enhance the efficiency of their functions, has every cause to be careful of too much Yoga: for the violation of natural processes can result in lasting paralysis. The Indians would not be so unproductive if they were worse Yogis, for they are not lacking in talent; the constant fixing of the mind bereaves it of its spontaneity; it no longer works of its own accord. The very nature of production, however, consists in discharging, from time to time, the creations which the mind has matured in silent rumination. For this reason, the man who here below wishes to achieve anything dares not force nature, whose normal courses proceed only in the form of the spiral. The alternation between various modes of consciousness, the rhythmic change of interests, is necessary and beneficial in the same sense as the alternation between waking and sleeping. I have learnt long ago not to suffer from periods of depression, and not to feel uneasy during spells of mental inertia: I know that temporary stupefaction is,

in the strictest sense, the preparatory condition of ensuing enlightenment.

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RANGOON

How admirably the laws of compensation work in this world! On leaving a country, weary with its impressions, one always suspects one's power of receptivity to be exhausted; and yet, as soon as one betakes oneself to other climes, one is sure to be surprised by the welcome experience of having remained as impressionable as before—for the new impressions require different organs from those which one had any opportunity for using before. In this way Burma is the almost mathematically exact complement of India, life being lived here entirely through the senses. India is beautiful, magnificent in parts, yet no typical Brahmin would subscribe to Théophile Gautier's confession: *Je suis de ceux pour lesquels le monde visible existe;* for him the Visible is Maya, mere semblance, or at any rate not worth seeing. His overwhelming propensity for the supersensual that inspires his soul has paled nature into a play of shadows for him. Little or nothing does he know of the individual purport and pregnancy of the hills, nothing of the primeval forest, nothing of the sea; he may, at most, be cognisant of gardens when under the spell of sultry dreams. And where Nature is overpowering to such a degree that he cannot evade her impressions, he transposes her meaning into transcendentalism, and in this process the peculiar meaning of appearance vanishes once more. Such an attitude is incompatible with normal humanity; it is fraught with penalties for such as are not marked out to be supersensual (in opposition to those who have a divine right to look beyond the sensuous), in so far as they not only appear, but are more obtuse than otherwise less gifted people; since they refuse to look upon the sensuous, while unable to cope with the transcendental they behold nothing at all. If a man has acquired this attitude temporarily, he is affected by it in the long run

as by a nightmare. Not very receptive souls may possibly remain unimpressed by India's psychic atmosphere: the scenery works upon them directly; they see the things in front of them as though thousands of years of thought had not transfigured the world. I, for one, felt the presence of spiritual entities unceasingly. I also was incapable of seeing Nature in India otherwise than as Maya; I felt as though I was trespassing when by chance I took her at her word. Thus, it strikes me as a happy release that I find myself to-day in a world which lives altogether for and through the senses.

This applies to Burma to an extraordinary degree, more so than to France or Italy, more even than to ancient Greece, whose atmosphere still hovers over her ruins. In Europe spirit is intellectually too powerful. The Greeks never ceased dreaming of Eternal Beauty, and ever since the whole of Western art has followed in the footsteps of this ideal—if only in the sense that the crudest nature is being glorified as an ideal. Thus, French sensuousness is, at bottom, metaphysics, for it is entirely based upon mental premises. Deprive the Frenchman of his imagination, and you will see his characteristic eroticism disappear. In Burma there is no kind of mental background whatsoever. Buddhism, which might indeed have created such a background, has in fact only built up a neutral frame within which the senses live their own naïve life.

The keynote of Burma is the Burmese woman, the unconsciously self-conscious girl. Her charm sways the whole of the life of the people. Nature herself wears her colours, she is the fostering genius of art. When I gaze upon the wilful curves of the temples and pagodas, the dainty wood-carvings, the glittering pillars, my thoughts instinctively revert to the maidens who move laughingly beneath and among them. The movement that inspires Burmese forms of art is instinct with the same spirit that teaches the daughters of the country how to walk, the glass ornaments mirror their smiles, the decorations reflect their own colours. Even the terrifying dragons and serpents on the copings and flagstaffs seem to harbour no more serious intention than that of frightening the exuberant children, every now and again, in the midst of their play. In this

world the girl reigns supreme. The fundamental traits in the kindly faces of the old men are animated by understanding for them, and even the monks appear to wear such an austere and dignified air for the sole purpose of restraining youth, from forgetting the seriousness of life altogether—as it is just the girls who insist that every boy, for no matter how short a period, must have been a real monk (just as in Germany he must have been a soldier).

Until nightfall I sat in the square facing the Shwee-Bagon-Pagoda. I saw the rays of the sun pass slowly through their whole range of tints on the gilded roofs, I saw the girls, flowers in hand, performing their evening devotions, while the old men, puffing tobacco contentedly, watched the sportiveness of the young. Two beggars were playing weird tunes in front of me upon junker-shaped wooden cymbals. Inquisitive crows meandered around me. Gaily coloured cocks displayed their unerring feeling for style in their heraldic attitudes. And, occasionally, a half-starved dog appeared who was so appallingly, so improbably ugly in form and expression that I could not help exchanging knowing glances with the wooden dragons overhead.

When night descended I drove back into the town. A Burmese house opened its hospitable door to me. And while the wrinkled mother was having her comfortable snore, I smoked and jested with her four daughters, exuberant children of compelling charm. My tongue was unintelligible to them, nor was I acquainted with theirs. Still we managed to understand each other very well with the help of the comprehensively human language of mirth, whose symbols are innate in every one.

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HOW can one avoid, given an artistic disposition, idealising the country and the people of Burma? What one sees and experiences here recalls again and again the myths of the Golden Age. In those days there were neither cares nor wants; all men were fond of each other, war and strife were unknown. Life sped happily on its way, like that of children in the mirror

of grown-up consciousness. Burmese life seems to speed along in just the same way.

This condition is due to Buddhism. Its extraordinary formative power in tropical surroundings appears ever more impressively in Burma than in Ceylon, because here the Church has far more importance than there, and because the possible merits of the picture hardly count compared with the frame. The Burmese as human beings cannot be placed on a high level in any sense; they are neither profound, nor do they possess real goodness of heart. These virtues are never developed in the case of children. Even the monks, however dignified they look, can hardly be regarded as being formed inwardly by Buddhism, which can be said of many among the Bhikshus of Ceylon: they have been formed externally, like the average Catholic priest. The wisdom of the rules of Catholic orders is great, but it proves its efficacy only subject to special, more or less abnormal, conditions. The Buddhistic canon in its grand simplicity is a form appropriate to almost every inhabitant of the tropics, and leads him to perfection as a matter of course.

How poor and puerile are the religious ideas of the Burmese! Religion means to them, on the one hand, a certain routine of life, an inherited form of psycho-physical hygiene, and, on the other, a cheap and easy means of supplying oneself for the beyond or one's next existence upon earth. It suffices to build a pagoda, to bequeath a fountain or a rest-house, to share one's superfluity with the poor, and to participate in the religious festivals which resemble our merriest fairs, in order to accumulate so much 'merit' that the future appears assured. This is precisely the type of religiosity which predominates among the people in Southern Italy and Spain—perhaps the lowest of all conceivable types. But in making this observation the problem is not solved. Can one expect a profounder sense of religion from the superficial souls of children? I should say that one ought not. They are not sufficiently independent for that. For them religion can only be an outer frame, whose value depends on the degree in which it forms them. Now this is exactly what Buddhism in Burma has been so successful in, that a

condition predominates among these irresponsible children which is really comparable to that of the Golden Age; given their inborn nature, they could not possibly be anything more or better than what they have become thanks to Buddhism. And this is certainly not due to its outer form in and by itself, but to the immanent profundity of Buddhism. Its form is the direct expression of its contents, and since these are so wonderfully true, form has been able to work miracles, even where its meaning has been misunderstood. For, in questions of practical life, it is not absolutely essential that a man should be conscious of the wisdom of the rules he obeys; let them be but wise, and they will evince their magic power even where they have never been understood. There is more truth in the ancient belief in the efficiency of magic formulas than our day cares to admit: there is virtue in words and phrases, which is communicable even to those who are incapable of grasping more than the letter.

The banks of the Irawaddy are studded with more monuments of piety than those of the Ganges. Pagodas upon pagodas adorn the slopes, cloister upon cloister, overshadowed by blossoming trees and encompassed by green gardens, enliven the sandy plains. Still the Irawaddy is not a holy river. It lacks a deeper symbolism, its greatness is purely quantitative. Nor does the gravity of Burmese pilgrims convey an impression of seriousness greater than that of school-children who, without thinking of the possibility of getting tired, are determined to taste all the possible joys of a Sunday excursion to the full.

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PENANG

THE vegetation of the Malayan Peninsula impresses me as though I had never seen the like of it before. I bend an admiring gaze upon the naïve self-assurance of the shoots, the intelligent pliancy of the creeping and climbing plants, the insinuatingly tenacious wooing of the foliage for a place in the

light: that wondrous tropical vegetative process which in its stillness yet conveys the impression of greater abundance of movement than the restlessness of a human crowd. It is true that by reason of the extreme exposure those shades of colour and form on which the beauty of a northern forest would depend are lacking here; it is with difficulty that one succeeds in disengaging particular forms in the sea of greenery. But the life of the whole derives a surplus of vitality from this very circumstance, each separate existence being merged in the whole. Just as a thousand little rivulets together make a stream, so tropical nature is borne in upon one's mind as an indivisible and glorious unit of life. This flora is incredibly rich, even more luxuriant than that of Ceylon. And it is more beautiful, too, for here lofty stems again and again cleave the maze of the jungle, so that the uncontrolled luxuriance of growth creates an impression similar to that of shading on a clear contour drawing. It is chiefly the light grey of the rotting trunks of the jungle giants that enables the eye to survey the immensity of the green. Here death has, as it were, marked the division of the bars in an all too intertwined score.

What wondrous magic there is in the world of plants! The restful, and, as it were, inevitable perfection, the unquestioned harmony of co-existence, the unconscious beauty of the plants, their care-free existence in itself, which yields withal a perfect solution of the problem of life, invariably arouses in me the feeling of certainty that I too am winning my way towards my goal. For I myself am deeply rooted in plant life, and therefore I can understand it; plant life is the everlasting substructure of the movements of my soul. And the more I grow conscious of this fact, the more secure do I feel. Here these friendly plants envelop me almost impetuously in the atmosphere of their being. They encourage me to think that I already possess the certainty for which I still search and struggle blindly, that I have already attained my goal; they intimate that all is well with the world.—How could precisely the active-minded man fail to see his dearest complement in plants? Was not the peaceful Sachsenwald the very place where Prince Bismarck loved to roam? We speak of defiant

oaks, of majestic pines: such descriptions are not substantial. What is essential for us in plants is just the fact that no word or concept taken from the active life of man can be applied to them. But the plant is comparable to women, or, rather, the life of women bears a resemblance to that of plants. It is the same motive which attracts the combative man to the restful woman, and to the unconcerned plant. Both are manifestations of that modality of life where the end seems attained at the very outset. It is what man's restless soul yearns for. It is for this reason that we men, as long as the decision was in our hands, always laid particular stress on the vegetative aspect of women. We do not stand in need of the active, energetic, busy woman.

This planet must have been a delightful place while plant life was still paramount upon its surface. Was it necessary for life to enter at all upon the arduous career of active progress? No superman will ever go beyond the rose, as far as realisation of significance is concerned. Why has this cumbersome way been adopted? This is the question I have so often asked myself dispiritedly when gazing from the pinnacle of a tower I had scaled, upon the flat land below. To-day, full of melancholy, I put the same question. I know: the ascent is our fate; I myself would despair if I were to rest. Yet when I recall the vistas disclosed to my view during the earliest stages, when I think of the joys which life offered to me then, I cannot help regretting that I was fated to rise.

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SINGAPORE

THE plant world determines the character of Malayan natures so much that I fail to be affected by anything else; again and again my gaze is captured by the plants.

I have not been absorbed in this form of life since Ceylon, therefore my interest in it is as new. I realize once more that for any one who could understand plants perfectly, life would no longer hold any secrets. And the plants surrender them-

selves so ingenuously to man. No being could be more sincere than they are, more truthful, more genuine; they perhaps, of all the world's creatures, represent themselves precisely as they are. How few men do this unless it be at fleeting moments! No matter how true they want to be—again and again something inessential, something accidental, steps into the foreground of the picture and the whole, which constitutes the real being, appears distorted. This applies even to the higher animals; whereas the plants, these blessed, pure creatures, are never subject to evil moods, and always mirror the very core of their being. Even phenomenologically their manifestations are quite as rich as those of more mobile beings: the variety of their forms is such that nothing short of a divine imagination could multiply them. In all probability, the opening up of the psychic sphere, that gave so much additional scope to man as compared with animals, has not led to any sort of new formation, whose spirit the plants had not realised upon their own level. The flora implies, on a definitely localised plane, not only a perfect expression of the spiritual, but, moreover, by far the most perfect which has been found so far. The highest specimens of mankind, regarded from the angle of perfection as compared with any flower, seem like abortions. Thus, the flora does not only raise, but also answers, all the problems which the human spirit may propound. The contemplation of plants has once more made me conscious of the empirical meaning of freedom. What do we call a free act? A spontaneous event taking place according to strictly predestined laws. The elementary notions contained in the above definition are illustrated by plant life with wonderful plasticity. I know nothing less mechanical than the springing-up of a shoot in the tropics; if anything can be called spontaneous, then it is such triumphant growth. Still, the laws of nature are never more directly in evidence than here. I am looking at one of those strange giant leaves which, as if by wilful intention, hang on their stem upside down. How taut is their form, how vibrating with inner life! And yet its nature can be understood, mathematically and physically, without further ado, and a technician might possibly have designed it.—Are we, in

practice, freer in any sense at all than the plants? Hardly. The basis of the empirical concept of freedom is the possibility of arbitrary action. But the arbitrary man is, in reality, the most fettered; no matter how tyrannically he may rule the world, he is a slave to himself, to his own passions, to the elements of his own soul, and only differs from plants in so far as his nature, as such, is more mobile, more fluid. Even the man who controls himself is not yet truly free, but only he who is free from himself, whom self-love no longer trammels in any respect; this, however, means, in the language of mysticism, the man who is perfectly obedient to God, or, expressed more scientifically, whose personal will is at one with the super-personal power which appointed his place in the world of appearances—and this again means the man who allows events to happen to him as the lily does. Plants and men are both ultimately free; that is to say, the life which animates them is essentially freedom. Empirical events have the same meaning in both cases; it is a process of self-expression according to laws. It is not an essential difference whether this happens by means of unconscious impulses, blind instincts, personal wishes, conscious agreement, or initiative in doing, which, ultimately, reaches beyond the personal sphere; the growing of plants, the wilful or sacrificial action of men—all mean the same thing. Were the plant to raise the question of liberty, its answer would not differ from our own.

I would have discovered the meaning of the instinct of immortality with less trouble if, instead of analysing my own feelings, I had looked deeply into all this greenery. All concrete ideas of immortality are excrescences of the root-consciousness that personality is no ultimate entity, that the meaning of life is more profound. This truth is demonstrated *ad oculos* by the flora. The plants know nothing of individuality, they are only exceptionally aware of death. The emphasis even in the most specialised single existence rests on what survives death.

And beauty? In the face of plants its meaning jumps to the eye. Every appearance strikes us as beautiful in which the existing possibilities find perfect expression. For this reason plants are always beautiful when nothing external has inter-

fered with their growth. Moreover, they wear a festive garment when the time of perpetuation draws nigh; then they are resplendent in the most glorious decoration of bloom. Scholars have endeavoured to explain this by considerations of utility: how blind intellect is! Beauty is everywhere a purpose unto itself; it is the ultimate expression of potentiality. The whole of creation becomes beautiful during the season of love, because then infinite, superindividual possibilities manifest themselves for a while in the individual, because then the spirit of eternity transfigures what is mortal. In the case of man, it makes his soul blossom; its gloriousness beautifies, as long as the blossom lasts, the plainest face. In the case of plants, being is exhausted in corporeality, the spirit puts forth corporeal blossoms.

The contemplation of the plant world gives one a key even to the darkest and most tragic problem: the one-sidedness of every direction of development. A being is either a monad or an element; as a monad it is doomed to death, as an element it is, though immortal, impersonal. A tree is perfect, either while in bloom or as a bearer of fruit, either as a towering stem or the dispenser of shade, either in rapid growth or solidity of fibre. The tree cannot be everything all at once. The utmost which is open to its effort is to fulfil many possibilities of perfection consecutively, in the course of its various periods of life: to grow rapidly at first, then gain in firmness; to devote itself first to its blossom, then to its fruit; to shoot upwards first, then to spread itself. But few are endowed with so rich an inner life that they can attain perfection in more than one sense.

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HONG-KONG

THE scenery of Hong-Kong reminds me of the Riviera; I have left the tropics behind me. The tension of the atmosphere has slackened, the rays of the sun are no longer oppressive, all transitions have become more soft and gradual.

Sundown and sunrise in the tropics disappoint the man who had high expectations of them: the sun rises up in the morning from the horizon like a fiery bubble—and it is light; at evening it sinks back into the sea like a heavy drop of molten metal—and it is night; no colour symphony before or afterwards, save when dense cloud-banks create the refraction of light of moderate zones artificially. These effects cannot compete in strength of contrast with those of the tropics; but their possibilities are not rich, and strong contrasts swallow up all shades. Thus I feel this evening as I look from the peak upon the expanse of the Chinese Sea as if new forces had been born in me: I perceive delicacies and shades in colour and form which I missed altogether a few days ago. And the nature of the Far East induces a process like no other: in it the lines are of a purity, and the transitions of a neatness, such as are created among us only by the artist's capacity for abstraction; this nature has already been stylised by God. Many of the most exquisite peculiarities of Chinese painting are already foreshadowed in it. When I first looked out upon the evening sea, it seemed to me to be overcast by long white strips of mist. Imagine my surprise when, soon afterwards, I saw islands swimming above these very strips. No direct vision could have taught me that these islands were not suspended in the sky; in the presence of such nature a similar imagination is required in order to catch the connection of perspective, as in the case of Far-Eastern painting.

I see it already: in China I will have to transform myself into a man of vision; here all appearance seethes with significance. There looms, before my mind's eye, a synthesis of essence and semblance such as I have never met with before.

PART FIVE: CHINA

CANTON

UNFORTUNATELY, I am beginning my stay in China in unfavourable circumstances: the country is in full revolution. Such periods are often called 'great times,' and many feed for the rest of their lives on the fact that they 'participated' in them: for those, however, who look below the surface, epochs of violent political upheaval are the least interesting of all. In the presence of extraordinary external events most men lose their balance; they live on the surface, which is not normal for them, or in any way symbolical of their being; their essential qualities do not appear at all. What do the deeds of violence of the *Terreur*, or the July Revolution, mean in reference to the bourgeois of Paris who committed them? Nothing. They were the mere actors in an impulse of the masses. There are, of course, exceptional natures, real storm-birds, who can only be themselves altogether at such periods, and they are then highly interesting; but storm-birds are more rare than one thinks; in the case of the majority their behaviour in exceptional circumstances has not the slightest symbolical significance. Almost every gentleman shows courage in a moment of danger, so does almost every mother when her children are in peril, and, especially in Germany, almost every one acquits himself well in the face of the typical dangers to which he is exposed by profession: the captain when his vessel is sinking, the general in battle, the burgomaster if a plague is visited upon his town, etc. Only these people are themselves in no higher degree than in their normal state, but rather less so or not at all: they act not as individuals but as representatives; and very often, only too often, these typical actions imply concealment of their real selves, as in the case of the rhetoric of delinquents on the scaffold. If Napoleon attached importance only to the behaviour of his generals *in extremis*, this was due to the fact that in his case all decisions were taken *in extremis*, and he was indifferent to the men in themselves; if he had cared for their real being, he would have

judged differently. Of course, this real being is not necessarily expressed within the frame of their daily existence, as Maeterlinck would have it, for this frame does not necessarily suit men; only a corresponding frame is in question, but such a frame cannot be, *par definition*, an exceptional one. In China least of all, the land of everlasting peace and order! I cannot take this revolution seriously, and, unless I am very much mistaken, no thorough-going Chinese does so in the sense in which it would appear a matter of course to Europeans; I have the impression that he looks upon it as revolutions ought to be regarded everywhere: as a crisis of the organism. The body does not get over certain stages of evolution without violence: it becomes ill, feverish, boils up; in this sense, revolutions are sometimes inevitable (although hardly half of those which appear in recent history belong to this category); the French Revolution, for one, corresponded undoubtedly to an inner necessity, no matter how little pleasing its consequences have proved themselves to be in general and for France in particular; for in no other way could the forms and institutions of the *ancien régime* be broken up, which had lived their time but which were strong precisely owing to their rigidity. Nevertheless, even the most inevitable infantile disease never ranks with heroic acts. I can hardly suppress a smile when I hear the 'acts of the people' glorified. China will not expose itself thus to ridicule. Nor will she revere Sun Yat-Sen as a hero for any length of time, which is what would undoubtedly happen in Europe; she will perhaps be grateful to him for what he has instigated, but for the rest she will not judge him otherwise than as he is: a good-natured, although not a harmless, theoriser.

It is not only in the sense of time, but also in that of space, that my start in China seems less auspicious than I would have hoped: in Canton the external side of life is so overwhelming and so importunate that it seems physically impossible to see through it. The official life, as such, is wholly uninteresting, because its forms are the expression, not of the soul, but of the objective necessities and conveniences of collective life, and thus hardly vary in significance, not only from people to people,

but even as between men and animals. Much has been written concerning the strangeness of Chinese institutions: I find them only too similar to European ones; no matter how different they may be *de facto*, they differ hardly at all in meaning. In this vast commercial city, famous for its singularity, I am hardly aware that I am in strange surroundings. What might a Chinese metaphysician learn, conversely, in Berlin or Frankfort? Little would he feel of the spirit, which, of course, is a different one there from here, in the turmoil of the town. He would notice rather less assiduity and work, and very much more restlessness, and he would probably reach the conclusion that we Europeans are people of a precisely similar kind, only on a lower level of culture.

So as not to return empty-handed, I remove the metaphysician and substitute for him the pure observer. In briskness of traffic, Canton beats everything that I have seen; there do not seem to be any idlers at all. And the uncanny thing is that all these beasts of burden wear a uniformly cheerful look. I am beginning to understand why the Chinese so easily appear inhuman to the European. If one compares men with apes, one should remember what the specifically grotesque element of the monkey consists in—the contrast between an eye of human intelligence and an animal face, for which reason every extremely intelligent and, simultaneously, vivacious eye in a human face always suggests something monkey-like, even in the case of a man like Kant. The Cantonese do not make an animal impression, but they appear inhuman, because one feels that behind their existence, which, according to our view, is unworthy of human beings, there lies not coarse nature but deep culture. Their cheerfulness is a product of culture. . . . Whence the excessively unsympathetic aspect of this city? I find it really impossible to gain clear impressions. It cannot be due to the filth and stench, to which one can object no more in China than in Italy: they belong to the peculiar character, and even to the specific charm; in the end I almost came to be fond of the exhalations of Benares, really painful in themselves. Still less can it be due to the specifically Chinese character, for this seems, on the contrary, to be very sympathetic.

It is due probably to the extremely commercial atmosphere. I have never lived for any length of time among business people of the smaller sort without experiencing a disturbance of my equilibrium. This consideration, however, does not decide the question either. . . . At last I have it: what strikes me as particularly repulsive in Canton is the soulless machine-like quality of its life. These beings act in the profoundest sense without aim or purpose; they lack altogether what constitutes the idealism of the business man: acting subject to great points of view; they wear themselves out like ants. And when ants, who are certainly only ants, have highly intelligent faces and are simultaneously undoubtedly cultured, the result is disquieting.

It cannot be true, what is asserted so often, that the heart of China beats in Canton. Canton is no more typical of this Empire than Marseilles or Naples are of Europe. But to that extent it probably is typical, and perhaps it is a good thing that this side of China has been presented to me first and in so aggressive a form because I would otherwise have overlooked it in the midst of all the beauty which is before me. Undoubtedly the Chinese is closer to the ant than any other human being; undoubtedly he is below us in this very sense. But here too is the root of his unintelligible superiority: the enormous social culture of the lowest strata of the people. There is no worker among the ants who in culture, in its own sphere, did not equal the greatest Grand Seigneur.

✦

I AM now so much at home here that the negative sensations which Canton continues to evoke in me hardly disturb my contemplations any more. Whatever may be said against it, this town *is* beautiful. Everything decorative is of a perfection such as I have never seen elsewhere. The art of the goldsmith, the ebony and ivory carver—whatever belongs to the arts and crafts—is on an incredibly high level; the most subordinate artisan here seems to possess taste in the highest sense. And when I then see what poor, dry fellows these marvellous artisans are, I feel disconcerted every time. Obviously the whole of this culture no longer means anything at all in ref-

erence to the individual; all accomplishment is based upon routine. Automatically my thoughts wander back to the distant times when the present rigid forms were still vibrating with life. . . . Then, however, I ask myself whether forms of perfect beauty have ever prevailed before they had detached themselves from their meaning? Florence, in the days when Leonardo and Michael Angelo were at work in it, could not have been nearly as beautiful as in the period of her decadence; during the time that the form was being created it did not exist. Thus, the China of to-day is very likely far more interesting to look at than that of the Tang dynasty. . . .

The Chinese, who in their early days were mighty creators, have apparently lost their inventive powers. It is all the more significant that they have not degenerated—in the sphere of art any more than in that of life—which is what happens nearly always at times of stagnation in the West; in their case the following of tradition seems rather to be the biological equivalent of invention. All that could exist in an unformed state is already crystallised in China, for which reason new creations, for a time at any rate, have become impossible. If, however, the same phenomena appear again and again, showing undiminished power, then this signifies anything rather than sterility: it is the way of nature, which also keeps, through immeasurable distances of time, to the same manifestations, before it decides upon innovations. One must evidently judge the culture of the Chinese according to geological epochs in order to do justice to it. Just so their antipathy to innovation will have to be interpreted: essentially they are certainly not antipathetic to innovation, for in the course of history China has undergone transformations as great as those of Europe; only it has been in less of a hurry. And on the whole it is not a good sign, but a bad one, if some one evinces too much haste. It can, of course, mean that he has placed his aim so high that he must not lose a minute if he is to attain to it at all; generally, however, it only means that he anticipates his end. . . .

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THE unheard-of beauty of form and colour of the streets and byways of Canton impresses me more and more; the most

exquisite culture of the senses speaks from all manifestations; there is hardly a household implement, hardly an arabesque, which in idea at any rate does not possess artistic value, no matter how often its execution fails. After sundown in particular the town has the effect of fairyland, like an immense symphony in black and gold. All over the city, beautifully shaped luminous bodies stand out from the black background of night, and everywhere fiery ideograms shine out into the darkness.

I could never see enough of them. They are so lovely in form that Chinese streets delight the eye, thanks to their shop notices and advertisements alone. How could writing and painting not be valued equally here? Even in idea, the highest art is contained in these hieroglyphics; and in order to present them in the way in which they are always demanded and in which they frequently occur, the hand of a real artist is needed. Connoisseurs often pay as much for a beautiful piece of handwriting as for a masterpiece of painting.

I will hardly be making a mistake if I trace the high level of culture of the Chinese, as far as visible form is concerned, in large measure to the existence of their system of writing. Not only do they live from their earliest youth in surroundings which must develop their sense of form—it implies a necessity of life for them to pay minute attention to form. There is no Chinese language in the vocal sense; a special dialect is spoken in every region, which often differs from that of another no less than English differs from German. All Chinese, however, employ the same written signs, and can, by their means, communicate with each other where they can no longer do so verbally; how could the writing of characters then not be studied thoroughly? Once this has been done, its further advantages follow of their own accord. The intrinsic beauty of the ideogram unconsciously educates their taste, all the more so as it is regarded as ill-bred not to have a beautiful handwriting, and the necessity of differentiating instantaneously a large number of such ideograms, whose marks often consist of the tiniest details, sharpens the vision of the eye. The incapacity of the educated Chinaman for producing anything

ugly, and the unrivalled standard of the sense for form which is possessed by the masses in China, are undoubtedly the direct consequences of the prevalence of this system of writing.

But its advantages are not exhausted by the enumeration of those which have been mentioned; I admire the system above all on account of its mental significance. An idea can generally be expressed within this system only symbolically, not objectively, or in and by itself; the symbolic image of a conceptual relation is painted, and from its connection with a preceding or succeeding symbol the meaning of what has been intended is made plain. In such circumstances it is impossible, first of all, to read without thinking at the same time; hence the surprising power of combination which even the lowest Chinaman betrays, who is capable of reading and writing. Then, of course, much more can be said by means of ideograms than by means of articulated means of expression. Only people who have never produced a profound thought assert that we know how to say exactly what we mean in all circumstances; the language does not exist which could make this marvel possible. Every epoch has its specific barriers, from which no genius can escape, and every language possesses special ones in and by itself. And that one should ever be invented in which it would be possible to express everything with absolute exactitude, seems all the less probable as the tendency of development lies in the direction of explicitness, and hence in the direction of impoverishment; it is not possible to say as much in French as in German, in modern English one cannot say as much as in that of the Elizabethan Age. So much is already true of that which in principle can be explained: but what about that which goes beyond all possible forms of expression, and yet is the most real portion of reality—the objects of metaphysical thought and of the innermost religious experience? These things simply cannot be rendered in our languages. But they can be represented in Chinese writing. It is possible to place symbols of conceptual relations side by side in such a way that they include, as well as qualify, the infinite, just as an open angle defines infinite space. Where one of the *scientes* sees these signs in front of him, he knows at

once what is meant, and he experiences, when he did not know it before, more than the longest explanation could teach him. To give an instance: the whole of Confucianism can be represented in three symbols (which are to be read in conjunction); the first of these means concentrating, making an effort, the second means the centre, and the third external harmony. By means of these really everything is expressed which is contained in the Four Books, and, moreover, that which is at the bottom of Confucianism in idea, but which its founder probably did not realise at all. What, in fact, could a mortal do more than to become perfectly inward by the extremest tension of the powers of his soul, and to express the inwardness attained to in the harmony of external appearance. This is not only the essence of Confucianism, it is more than Confucius ever guessed, it is the supreme ideal of human aspiration. Oh, if only I knew how to write Chinese! Gladly would I then give up all other means of expression. After all words have passed away, blessed spirits will still see Truth before their eyes in fragments of Chinese calligraphy. . . .

The Chinese method of expression is not objective or exact, but suggestive, and presupposes a sympathetic hearer or listener, in the same way as the figurative method of expression of women. This is in many ways an inconvenience: not only because it makes practical arrangements more difficult—undoubtedly it is less to suggest than to pronounce clearly what one means; our own poets and writers, who aim at suggesting effects, therefore are not above, but below, our explicit ones; thus Stephane Mallarmé stands below Baudelaire. This disadvantage expresses itself particularly in philosophy, whose intrinsic problem it is to render clear what everybody may surmise only indistinctly. Accordingly, scientific recognition can only be represented imperfectly in Chinese writing. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to accuse it as one does Mallarmé's of the feminine method of expression. For ideograms are means of expression of a different kind from words or from our writing: they are comparable with mathematical formulas. They may be described as insufficient by the man who is simple enough to demand that they shall define in

themselves every particular result whose law they determine: in reality they are more precise than any version of language could be, and they embrace, moreover, a great deal more besides. That is precisely what is true, in so far as one can read them, of Chinese formulas expressed in writing. Certainly they do not determine directly, but they define the possible so clearly that, in connection with other possibilities, the reality in question is made absolutely plain. Thus, the Chinese language of writing for many purposes is not below but above ours, because, like mathematics, it can express relations directly which escape all linguistic confines. What 'significance' really stands alone? A thousand over- and undertones mingle their sounds, and we must silence them if we want to be clear; Chinese writing remains univocal, although no overtone appears to be subdued. At the same time, it robs reality of nothing of its colour, which is the fate of mathematical formulas. All the sayings of the sages of China are characterised by a certain tendency towards paradox. This is a matter of course in so far as all truth must seem paradoxical to the unlearned, and as remote truths in particular can only be represented in powerful contrapuntal opposition—but surely the nature of Chinese paradox is very strange: it has a humorous touch; I know no expression of Chinese wisdom which does not make me laugh heartily in certain moods. Why is this? If I disregard the national temperament, or if I trace it back to general principles, I find that in these sayings the colour of harmonious life seems to be transferred to the cosmos. There are few profounder things than humour; it is possessed by him who knows how to give expression to a profound opposition from the point of view of a beneficent and serene mind. Thus the hieroglyphic writing of the Chinese gives a humorous setting to the whole cosmos; thus the *mécanique céleste* is translated into epigram.

As long as China retains her system of writing there is no danger that, in one direction at any rate, the spirit will be killed by the letter: for here significance creates all the facts. And I do not believe that this system will ever be replaced by a more modern one, although it may be expected that China, like Japan, will supply itself, for business purposes, with a

handier system. At any rate, it would be folly to believe that the substitution of our own writing for the Chinese would involve progress, for that which is thus called progress is not the victory of mind over matter, but its opposite. What could signify a greater triumph of matter than that the mind should be forced to adjust itself entirely to it?

✦

TO-DAY I visited the place where, quite recently, executions of the most horrifying cruelty took place daily. Quite suddenly it has all become a matter of the past: torture has been abolished, and in all probability for ever. This innovation—to modern European ideas an event of immense importance—seems to have been decided upon and introduced just like any tariff reform: the members of a committee calculated that humaneness would pay better in the given circumstances. No one in China seems to see anything special in this change in the method of justice, not even those most nearly concerned, the delinquents. Only the guild of executioners is said to demur, because their experts have now been put into an unhappy position.

While I tarried on the scene of so many torments, my thoughts naturally dwelt upon the meaning of cruelty in killing, and this led me to the conclusion that, theoretically, it was very well justified; no worse, at any rate, than the refinements of the pleasures of love. In both cases it is not a question of a direct increase of feeling, but of an indirect one: through the mental images which are related with it. Where death, as is the case everywhere in the East, does not seem terrifying in itself, it is natural to set the stage as impressively as possible, so that the execution shall not fail altogether of its deterrent effect. In every circumstance the meaning of killing by torture does not centre in the man who suffers it, but in him who beholds, or could suffer it—that is to say, the man who only imagines it—just as even the most horribly tortured individual in all probability does not suffer anything like as horribly as the sympathetic observer imagines. In the case of the actual sufferer, the absolute greatness of the pain soon kills the

whole of his power of imagination, and with it the possibility of relating the sensations of the moment with those of the past and the future; once this has happened, once consciousness is only filled by the present, then the worst torture can hardly be felt to be worse than the treatment of a diseased tooth by a brutal dentist. I have had considerable opportunity of experimenting in the sphere of painful sensations, and I have found that hardly bearable pain can, without further ado, be halved by transferring the centre of one's consciousness—that is to say, by diversion of the attention as such, or by the exclusion of imaginative processes which enhance the facts; in addition, there is the further meliorating circumstance that man accustoms himself even to pain, and is incapable of experiencing it beyond a certain degree: when he does not faint, he becomes numb. This consideration is confirmed by all experience which has been made in the case of torture. First of all, coarse individuals suffer less than delicately organised ones, simply because their power of imagination is less; then, martyred Chinese in particular betray incredible calm, because they see nothing terrible in torture; and finally, undoubtedly sensitive natures have endured tortures in the Middle Ages surprisingly well. If torture, therefore, should have its meaning in the delinquents and not in those who watch it or think of it, then its invention and introduction would have been based upon a misunderstanding.

This serves to explain the fact that otherwise highly cultured nations have adhered to cruel methods of execution for so long; where the theory that punishment is to act above all as a deterrent is accepted at all—and where is it not accepted?—torture seems justified in principle, and it depends rather on considerations of expediency than on those of humaneness, if and when torture is abolished. For this reason, there is probably no great inner difference between us, who took this step over a hundred years ago, and the Chinese, who followed our example only last week, and this consideration removes a great deal of the paradoxical character of the Chinese attitude to this reform, to which I pointed at the beginning of these observations. Even in Europe the system rather than the men

has been humanised. Those who believe in progress do not know how to differentiate as clearly as might be desired between these two factors: it is permissible only in the rarest of cases to draw conclusions from the system to the man who acts in accordance with it. A judge who ordered the application of extraordinary torture in the Middle Ages does not need to have been a worse man than a humane judge in our day, whereas, conversely, the humaneness of the latter need not signify anything in reference to his being; even executioners are not infrequently kindly people. The average man always regards as fair what he is accustomed to; the man who first pointed to the inhumanity of torture need not necessarily have been an angel, but he was certainly a most original person. Marcus Aurelius felt no hesitation in being present at the cruel fights in the circuses; in the modern sense even Luther did not feel humanely; St. Theresa, one of the most glorious souls who have ever lived, found nothing to object to in the methods of justice of Philip II and only saw generosity at work in the war of destruction against the Aztecs, which we count amongst the most disgraceful which man has perpetrated.—One thing, however, is probably correct: all Asiatics, and among these the Chinese in the first place, lack the capacity for sympathy remarkably. Even Buddha's 'compassion' was not sympathy in our sense of the word; it contained no stimulus to help; no modern Indian, in so far as he is not Western in spirit, seems to possess that imagination of the heart which makes a torture of witnessing inactively the suffering of others; and no Chinese, above all, is capable of sympathy in the Christian sense. Are we concerned here with physiological differences? Probably only in so far as self-consciousness in the East has its centre in the individual less than among us, and for this reason individual suffering seems, relatively speaking, indifferent; on the whole, the difference is due to psychic causes. It depends on the fact that the recognition of the solidarity of all life, which, as such, they possess in a high degree, has taken hold of their sensibility less than among us, that the *tat twam asi*, not embodied in any commandments, laws and institutions, inspires the involuntary impulses of their

soul to a lesser degree. By nature all men are unsympathetic towards everything which does not concern their person, and cruelty is especially nearer to men than humaneness. This is due to the primitive animal instinct of malicious joy at the sufferings of others, which is the first deduced function of assent to the fight for existence. Every being lives objectively at the expense of others; even at the level of a dog's consciousness, this produces subjectively a feeling of heightened vitality, where others are worse off than one is oneself; the step from here to intentional torture is not far. For this reason, atrocities are committed on the part of humane people regularly as often as the brute gains the upper hand in them in war. Will the tendency to cruelty ever be overcome? I do not venture to prognosticate. Of all Europeans only the Englishman is habitually so advanced that he experiences natural disgust in causing others to suffer, or in watching them suffering—but even in his case, this is only true where circumstances are favourable to his nerves; even he becomes brutal in tropical Africa. On the whole, the tendency to cruelty among us seems to be repressed rather than outgrown. But one day we may get so far that the human consciousness will be definitely decentralised from the level at which one being lives at the expense of another, into the higher realm where the suffering of one happens to all, where one man's gain is to the advantage of everybody. Then, and only then, will the beast have been overcome.

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THE soldiers have destroyed the images of gods in most of the temples, and the mass of the people do not regard this as a sacrilege. From the point of view of the Church the Chinese are undoubtedly irreligious; and as pronounced intellectuals, they assume a sceptical position towards all myths of the beyond. The attitude of most cultured people towards theological questions is that of Confucius, that it is superfluous and derogatory to concern oneself with transcendental problems; the significance of the world manifests itself in natural and tangible phenomena completely. That the Chinese are irreligious in a

profounder sense is certainly not true, and I will return to this point later on. But this much seems certain, that divine service does not mean anything religious to them; what we see here is nothing but superstition and magic. I felt surprised at the fact that even the cultured individuals in this country, in which public opinion *in ecclesiasticis* is so free, participate to a certain, and by no means small, degree in temple rites and religious performances, and I tried to get to the bottom of the meaning of these facts. The result was very extraordinary: the temples mean to them just about what boards of agriculture and economic councils mean to us, and the priests are more or less equivalent to our engineers. They are the experts who have got to regulate the intercourse with the world of spirits.

I, for one, find this idea not superficial but profound, even if it is expressed somewhat grotesquely, which happens so often from our point of view in China. Even to the Indians the gods are not transcendental beings, in the sense of the Christian God, but natural phenomena of a higher kind, and ritual exists in order to maintain good relations with them. But the Indians are so religious in the Church sense that they credit the gods subconsciously with more than corresponds with their strict ideas of them; thus, even the Kali cult does not seem essentially different from that of Christian worship. The Chinese, on the other hand, who are practical and matter of fact, have drawn every possible conclusion from the premises which could be drawn from them: if there are demons, and if it is possible to change their unwelcome effectiveness into one that is welcome, then it must of course be done; there must be institutions and people who undertake this important business professionally. And this is the meaning of the Church.

It is impossible to believe how busy the technicians are who have to appease the demons. China literally teems with spirits, to such an extent that the comfort of life suffers seriously from the disturbances which unceasing consideration of them requires. One can neither bury nor marry when one likes nor where one likes, nor even those whom one wants to: everything is dependent upon incommensurabilities. A missionary whom I met once asked a high official, with the intention of taking

away his belief in spirits, why it was that such spirits did not exist in Europe. He thereupon received the reply: if nobody in Europe believes in spirits, then of course they do not exist there; he personally was very much in favour of their disappearing from China, but this was hardly to be expected because the belief in them was too general to die out soon. He meant that they were objectively real in China because people believed very strongly in them. And, in fact, this seems to be so: whatever can be interpreted as the intervention of spirits, such as being possessed, or under a magic spell, etc., takes place in China more often than anywhere else.—How subtle was that Mandarin! He was no less so than the Brahmin who answered, in reply to the question as to what was the use of praying to gods, as they were only natural phenomena of an unsubstantial and transient kind: Prayers are useful so that the gods may be strengthened. He meant the same thing, that no matter whether they represent objective or only subjective realities, a link is at any rate created by faithful prayer, through which the mental image can affect the man who prays.—No, I cannot blame in the Chinese what almost all European residents and travellers blame in him, I cannot see a sign of superficiality in it, quite the contrary. The Chinese, at any rate, see farther into the meaning of things than those progressive Frenchmen whose latter-day persecution of Christians can only be described as insipid. Chinese superstition is more profound than modern lack of faith. But, of course, better and more advantageous consequences could be drawn from the depths of this insight than the Chinese have known how to do up to the present.

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GOETHE wrote somewhere how intensely a single clever saying had furthered him. Something similiar happened to me to-day: the accidental acquaintance with an apparently indifferent fact has made me cover a good piece of the road towards the understanding of the Chinese.

What disturbed me more and more was the impassiveness of this people, their uncanny equanimity. The calm of the Indians does not surprise me, nor that of the Turks: the former lack

vitality and energy, and the latter are phlegmatic by temperament. But the Chinese are not phlegmatic at all, no matter how calmly they demean themselves, and they are vital to the tips of the fingers. How is it possible that their masses can give such an impression of serenity?—I am told of uncontrollable outbreaks of anger, which are said to be more violent even than those related concerning Scandinavian berserkers. They say that it happens from time to time, that a man gets into so thorough a rage that it takes several days ere he gets back his equanimity; in the meantime he is said to be furious as bulls are furious, absolutely irrespective of the cause. The Chinese explain this phenomenon as due to the accumulation of the substance of anger, *Ch'i*. Many diseases are traced back to it, and European doctors confirm the correctness of the theory in its general outline: in fact, many disturbances in the Chinese organism, some that end fatally, are believed to be due to repressed rage.

Now the placidity of the mass is no longer an insoluble riddle to me. Every one knows that the giants of action, like Cæsar, Napoleon, Mahomet, Alexander, Peter the Great, and even Bismarck, were subject more or less periodically to nerve crises, which assumed the shape sometimes of epilepsy, sometimes of fits of rage, sometimes of collapse or fits of crying, but have always been correctly regarded as what nerve-doctors call freeing reactions. Temperaments of volcanic energy, which have to be continuously collected, require a safety-valve opened at certain intervals if they are not to burst; and the steam rushes forth from them all the more impetuously the more condensed it was. What is true of the heroes of action applies, within certain limits, to the Chinese as a people. They are, on the one hand, extraordinarily vital, and, on the other, they practise the greatest self-control of all people. Therefore it was to be expected, on an *a priori* basis, if nature was to remain nature, that occasional fits of fury must belong to the national character of the Chinese, and, moreover, fits of a much more violent kind than those which are natural to the people of Southern Europe, who habitually let themselves go. The facts of the matter are in accordance with the postulates of reason; I there-

fore feel mentally satisfied. The *Ch'i* should be studied more in detail by psychologists. To-day the interaction between body and mind commands the centre of interest: it could be studied nowhere better than in the Far East, where self-discipline has been carried furthest and where its boundaries—the boundaries which nature has set to culture—appear therefore most clearly. Above all, I should like to see the following hypothesis tested by facts: the Chinese possess, unless I am very much mistaken, the greatest physical vitality of all human beings. Neither as individuals nor as a nation do they seem to be capable of exhaustion; they get over illnesses which would be fatal to other people, they can stand an excess of work (also of mental work) without evil consequences to their nerves, and the worst debauches harm them relatively little. The nation seems to be deteriorated to a considerable extent neither by over-culture, nor by inbreeding, nor by opium, nor by syphilis—in fact, by none of the things which ruin other peoples. The only general phenomenon of degeneration which can be observed among the cultured classes is their growing philistinism—and this is not regarded, for very good reasons, as pathological in Europe at all. Is this marvellous physical vitality not the consequence of psychic culture? It is a fact that cultured individuals can stand the wear and tear of war better than uncultured ones, that courageous men become less frequently diseased and take less harm than cowards, that the nerves of a self-disciplined man can offer greater resistance than those of the man who lets himself go, in short, that it is possible to make oneself immune from physical dangers by psychic measures; and the tendency of many schools of our time is in the direction of strengthening the body through the culture of the soul. Is the inherited vitality of the Chinese not due to the same cause? They have practised self-control for thousands of years, forced to do so by external circumstances, and encouraged in it by a wise moral system; and in the process has not that become inherited property which among us is acquired only through personal effort by favoured individuals? —Of course, it must not be forgotten that in China natural selection has assisted the building up of the race more than

anywhere else, and that this alone explains a great deal; weak natures are hardly capable of life in China.

38

MACAU

I HAVE escaped from the busy turmoil of Canton into the most idyllic and peaceful place which exists in the Far East: I have reached the delightfully situated Macau, where Camoëns completed his *Lusiadas*. To what a remarkable extent the atmosphere of China has taken possession of me! As a matter of course the reaction against city life expresses itself in my soul by quietistic thoughts *à la* Laotse and Djuang Tse; for there can be no doubt that the extreme form of the quietism of these men must be understood as a reaction against the extremes of sociability and bustle which characterised China even in their day. When I re-read their writings here, then I feel as if I were listening to the echo of my own self. The same moods in Indian or European colouring would strike me as heterogeneous, nay even as tactless.

What is it which gives its special character to Chinese mysticism?—Certainly not its meanings, its substance; in this direction it agrees with the wisdom of all peoples of all time. It is partially its method of expression. I will not expand further on this subject, as it is a direct function of the Chinese system of writing. In just the same way, Taoistic philosophy does not express definite thoughts so much as their ultimate significance. And since this significance alone partakes of immortality, whereas all conceptual embodiments must pass away sooner or later, this fact brings about an absolute superiority of the Chinese expressions of supreme truth; they alone will continue to live as they stand; that which can be said of other literatures only in the case of some rare sentences applies in principle to all the expressions of Chinese wisdom. But I am not concerned to-day with these objective things: I am too tired after Canton, too needful of rest. And then Macau is much too beautiful for me to enjoy the examination of abstract

questions. When I think of Laotse to-day, I do not see the harbinger of eternal truth in front of me, but a genial old gentleman with a twinkle in his eye, with his unending flow of humour, his winning *bonhomie;* and if I stop to ponder about the peculiarity of his wisdom I mean its concrete peculiarity, that which is specifically Chinese in it. This is mainly expressed in the keynote of caution and circumspection which resound from even the sublimest sentences of Chinese wisdom. They will put up with anything rather than unpleasantness, calculate everything in advance to a nicety, they organise everything beforehand; they would rather place their light under a bushel than draw attention to themselves by their luminosity, they prefer to appear weak rather than strong, they believe in giving way in all circumstances.—This is just as typical of the Chinese as longing for peace at any cost is typical of the Indian, and active optimism of the Westerner. This trait cannot possibly be sympathetic to me. But since I have been in Canton I understand it so well that I am almost prepared for the moment to make it my own. How could a man become proud and free after the manner of the Greek sages, or serenely detached in the sense of the Rishi, when it is literally impossible to keep at a distance from the masses? Within the masses the wise man has no choice but to be cunning if he wants to live a more or less supportable life. The Westerner in such cases generally wears the mask of a charlatan, because our plebs permit gladly to an eccentric, owing to their love of what is new and unusual, what they would never forgive a sage, so that his best policy is to let his wisdom appear as folly. In China, where anything out of the ordinary is condemned in all circumstances, the remarkable individual has no choice but to avoid all friction with the crowd, and this can only be done at the expense of his pride. Hence the extreme enmity to culture and society on the part of the few who have nevertheless succeeded in withdrawing from the masses: it would be inhuman if they had overcome this last shred of resentment. How much is explained in China by over-population! And how instructive are the effects which this has had upon the Chinese temperament, for us white men who will also, sooner

or later, develop into a compact mass! China undoubtedly owes its immense moral culture to it, and in this respect it still excels the rest of humanity. It is impossible to flourish as an uncultured individual when men are packed together as closely as they generally are in China; there, a boor is scarcely less appalling than a criminal, who is a danger to the whole community, is among us. But, on the other hand, what a disadvantage this is! How is an original personality to be developed in the midst of such mass suggestion? How, above all, is he to gain authority? Even among us, a genius by no means necessarily fulfils his destiny; in China such a thing can only happen thanks to an extraordinarily auspicious accident. No matter how much talent a man may have in a small, out-of-the-way village—how is he to work his way up if so many millions stand in his way? In such circumstances resignation from the start means indeed the only salutary course. . . .

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I LIKE the Chinese here ever so much more than I did those of Canton. The tradesmen, of course, cheat me with equal success here as there, but that is not the point; in the Chinese quarter of Macau the same atmosphere predominates which is so homely and attractive in the style of Kung Fu-Tse: it is the atmosphere of a cheerful bourgeois existence, possessing an extreme sense of form. How little it matters what people actually do! Christ preferred to associate with publicans and sinners. What actually happens in the world is probably without any significance.—The continuous rattling of the gong in Chinese theatres has ultimately the same effect as silence: just so it is most likely no matter in itself whether one lives in the desert or in a capital. The air of Paris remains stimulating, no matter how silly the behaviour of its inhabitants may be; that of St. Petersburg drains one's soul, no matter whom one may associate with. The psychic atmosphere of a town is the result of so many component parts that the individual component is of no account; just because there are so many of them, the general atmosphere inevitably gives a picture of the real average. And here I notice to-day, first of all,

what I have never felt with equal clarity anywhere else, however familiar I am with its theory: that originally there is no necessary connection between action and being.

This is one of the fundamental views of the Indians. As in so many cases, here, too, something which has been recognised and understood more profoundly in India is better translated into life in China; besides, it is easier to understand in China because the Chinese, no matter what people say, are much closer to us in culture, for which reason it is easier to judge correctly of the differences. Among Europeans who live altogether externally, being is necessarily influenced by action, and accordingly intercourse is as a rule only agreeable with those who practise a noble profession. In Europe the ruling individual stands on the highest human level, as it is his duty to act unselfishly on a large scale; the artist, who usually believes in distorted ideals, is unpleasant to deal with, and the business man is repugnant everywhere unless his far-reaching schemes do not drive him, in spite of himself, beyond his professional thieving. In the East there is in general no necessary connection between professional activity and being, and I am more distinctly aware of this here than ever. I have been observing the traders closely who draw my money out of my pocket with so much skill: no matter how great an allowance one may make for friendliness as a portion of business technique, I am convinced that many of these pedlars only carry out their business and are not identified with it. They may be on a high level as human beings.

The German understands this connection only with difficulty. Here he must learn from the Russian, the only European who originally possesses a direct relation to the soul of his neighbour. Why should a man be bad, however much he may lie and deceive? One must certainly take measures to protect oneself; one should not let oneself be deceived, and where the other party is too strong one should restrain him by law, so that authority shall render him harmless. But it is barbarous to *judge* a man's being by his actions. For who has got to the stage in which his actions are the complete expression of his soul? I have never seen such a man. And where being and

action do not harmonise, the man who lies and deceives because custom permits it is equivalent in every way to the other man who behaves justly from conventional motives. For him who knows there is no difference between a 'pillar of society' and a dishonest pedlar, in so far as neither of them are what they do: if anything, the latter stands on a higher level in so far as he has no ideals and therefore cannot be unfaithful to them. I know it is not without danger to say such things; all the more so as virtuous action does in the end influence the soul, and vice versa; the Indians would have got farther than they have done if they did not differentiate so clearly and acutely between action and being. But these are considerations of practical politics which do not concern me for the moment.

✦

LAOTSE says:

He who recognises his light
And yet remains in the dark,
He is the model of the world.

The model. . . . I do not know whether Richard Wilhelm's translation is exact here, but I should not be surprised. In this instance the gulf which divides our conceptions of the world (in which it is regarded as sinful to hide one's light under a bushel) from that of the Taoists can be surveyed with particular distinctness.

If the word were not 'model,' but 'mirror,' then nothing could be said against this dictum. Unconscious creation without intention, marching onwards without wanting to get on, being content with given circumstances—this is, in fact, Nature's way; and the man who follows consciously in her traces can very well be described as her mirror. But as her model? Only if nothing higher can be conceived than the way of nature. This is, in fact, the presupposition of the whole of Chinese wisdom. Whereas, we recognise a domain of freedom above nature, whereas we regard it as our duty to graft the spirit of freedom upon the limitations of nature, with the result that the natural static equilibrium does not present itself to us as an ideal but as a condition which must be overcome, and that

creation as opposed to obedience, overcoming as opposed to surrender, willing in general as opposed to not willing, seem to us to embody the higher value—the Chinese have arrived at precisely the opposite conclusion. Thus we arrive, in the extreme case, at the paradoxical situation that the enlightened individual regards it as his mission to hide his light under a bushel.

Taoist wisdom is reproached on this account again and again with unfruitful quietism, not least by the Confucianists, who are ultimately of one spirit with it. There is no doubt that Chinese wisdom fails in the self-conscious formation of this life, just as creative work is opposed to its principle. It cannot be denied, however, that the works of the Taoist classics contain, perhaps, the profoundest sayings of wisdom which we possess, the profoundest precisely from the angle of our ideal, the ideal of creative autonomy. How is this possible? It is possible because the Tao, 'Significance' (as Richard Wilhelm has translated it so admirably)—is expressed in natural processes more perfectly than in the freest way of freedom; so that a life cannot but lead to perfection which reflects altogether the sway of the forces of nature.

Heaven is eternal and the Earth enduring.
The cause of Heaven's and Earth's eternal duration is
That they do not live for themselves.
Therefore they can perpetually give Life.
Just so the Elected-one:
He places his self hindmost,
And it comes foremost.
He renounces his self
And his self remains preserved.
Is it not thus:
Just because he does not care for his own,
Does that, which is his own, become perfected?

These glorious lines of Laotse are true in spite of the mythical relation which he affirms between heaven and man, because here the processes of nature are understood according to their

profoundest meaning, and because there is no difference in meaning between vegetative and divine life. The call: back to nature! understood in this way, has always advanced men. Even where it has been wrongly understood, as in the case of Rousseau, and also several later Taoists, it has only rarely done harm, because Nature *is* perfect in her sphere, and hence even superficial copying of her, a retrogression to her conditions as such, brings the man constricted by his concepts nearer to his vital centre. So much for the meaning of Taoist wisdom. I have already dealt with its unique significance of expression: of all the formulas of metaphysical reality which have been discovered hitherto, the Chinese ones alone are probably immortal. As to the human type which it produces, it possesses that hybrid nature which is characteristic of the artist as well: in the best case he belongs to the highest of which men are capable; in all other manifestations except the highest, he seems inferior to other types. No matter how great a Laotse may have been—the average Taoist was probably always a mediocre fellow.

We, at any rate, must regard him as such, because in our eyes it is the mission of man to rise above the plane of Nature. If we too honour a Laotse as one of the greatest of men, it is due to the fact that he has penetrated appearance altogether, and has thus gone beyond the limitations of nature as well as excelled the mission of men. I suggested above that the Confucians also regard the Taoists as a low type, whereas the opposition between Confucian and Taoist wisdom does not seem so very great to us; this is due to the Chinese element in both schools. Thus I have arrived once more at the point at which I left off yesterday. This wisdom is, after all, Chinese wisdom, and to this extent not supernational and difficult for us to do justice to. If I therefore say that the average Taoist is an inferior fellow, I possibly only express, with this peremptory judgment, my limitations as a European.

✦

I AMUSE myself at the hour of the siesta by reading the Liao-tshai-tshi-i, the 'curious stories from the den of refuge' of Pu

Sung-ling, the 'last of the immortals' of China. The quality of humour which appears in this work is exquisite; real or possible events seem to be related quite calmly and professionally, even with a certain dryness, but the stories are told in such a way that they inevitably strike the reader as funny, although the intention is not apparent. In inner value the humour of Gogol is equivalent to that of the Chinese, but that for which there is no equivalent in European literature since the days of the Greeks is the literary mastery by which it has been found possible to achieve humorous effects out of the pure form without calling any material circumstances to aid. At first sight the humorous element does not seem capable of presentment in a severe form. China proves the error of such an opinion.

I gain my impression from a translation, which is presumably bad: on what a high level must the original be placed if the translation has failed to rob it of its nature! Even now I can understand very well why cultured Chinese who possess a command of European languages will only admit ancient Greek literature as real art and as almost equivalent to that of China: the Greeks alone were simultaneously severe and rich in their method of expression. The strictness of the Latin form is exclusive—the only form to which the term of strength can be applied in the West since the days of Greece: form must be inclusive, it must melt, condense, and not mutilate but enhance its possible content, if its severity is to embody the highest value. It is true that the Chinese masters work in certain respects under more favourable conditions than any others: they can be severe in their forms without tracing definite boundaries. They owe this to their marvellous system of writing. As I have remarked already, it is possible in China literally to express as much, and even more, with three hieroglyphics than can be said in our languages on many long pages—our masters of precision have all had to bury a great deal in silence; the Chinese artists have all the advantages on their side which the pure mathematician has as compared with the physicist in science. And the disadvantage which is inherent in this system from our point of view, namely, that these

poems exist chiefly for the eye and cannot very well be heard or read aloud, obviously does not arise for the Chinese, for whom this convention is a matter of habit. But what is the use of speaking of easier or more difficult conditions? Man creates the conditions which he deserves. China's supremacy of form is unquestionable in all circumstances.

At night-time I occasionally visit one of the famous 'gambling hells' and amuse myself with the fan-tan. There can hardly be anything more calm and peaceful than such a hell. Gamblers almost always look earnest and professional, but I have never observed anywhere such cheerful equanimity as in Macau. The game in itself is infinitely dull; the player at best can only win very little, the bank must in all circumstances win a great deal. The Chinaman, however, goes home calmly and placidly after he has played away his daily wage. He rocks himself at most, if he has lost too much, in sweet opium dreams to comfort himself.

While I watched this game, the passage in the Bhagavad-Gita came to my mind in which Krishna (as God, as Içvara) says of himself: I am the game of the gambler. As a matter of fact, the feeling for hazard, whatever may be said against it, implies the existence of vitality. The independent staking of pure chance as the sole condition of experience means, regarded from the Atman point of view, the same thing in principle as being a match for the changes and chances of life. For life is, after all, nothing but the capacity to assert a condition of inner equilibrium within the transition of external circumstances. The fact that most gamblers, in intimate contradiction to themselves, seek after systems, belongs to the counterpoint of Life: we always do that which destroys the meaning of our real volition.—Why is it that the type of the gambler—no matter what his stake may be—cannot be regarded as a high one? It is due to the fact that the man who, within the correlation of life with the outer world, stresses the accidental side, thereby placing what is senseless above sense; he really abdicates as a free, responsible being. The gambler is the antipode of the hero: whereas the latter knows his life to be profoundly significant and sacrifices it because he recognises

something even higher, the former stakes his life because he thinks it indifferent.

39

TSING-TAU

I AM beginning to be grateful to the revolution: thanks to it, a large number of distinguished Chinese, among them several ex-Governor-Generals and ex-Viceroys, have gathered together in Tsing-tau, whither they have fled from the partisans of Western civilisation. Richard Wilhelm interprets between them and myself. Thus I am beginning to get an insight into the highest possibilities of Chinese humanity.

My expectations are being exceeded by a wide margin; these gentlemen, whatever they may be as human beings, stand on an extraordinarily high level as types; especially their superiority impresses me. Not only do they stand above their outward fate, which is such a sad one at the moment: they rise above their thoughts, their actions, their personality in general; and they do so not in the way the Yogi does it, who has leapt beyond appearance, but in the more difficult sense of the worldly-wise, who preserves his inner freedom in the midst of the turmoil in which he participates. In India, people disappointed me; they are less than their literature. What is highest and profoundest in them has found expression in abstract thought, and the majority of live Indians do not embody the striving after the ideal, but they act it; therefore one learns little through intercourse with them. The vital Chinese, on the other hand, are undoubtedly more than their wisdom, yea, and I would almost say that they are more than their classic literature. I am beginning to understand the meaning of Confucianism. Kung Fu Tse struck me, until now, as a rationalising moralist, and the high praise which falls to the lot of Mencius astonished me to some extent since I could only regard his conception of the world as no doubt exceedingly reasonable but not profound. Now I realise that Confucian philosophy must be understood in quite a different way from

the Indian and from the German: as philosophy it does not represent any intrinsic and independent expression at all, but it represents the abstract formula of a reality which has either been experienced or is to be experienced; the word of Kung Fu Tse must be understood as flesh, or as a reference to existing flesh. In these circumstances his teaching assumes quite a different character and appears separated by a wide abyss from the moral philosophy of our eighteenth century, which it resembles so closely on the surface; therefore it does not signify much if its thoughts, as such, are not profound: I do not believe that God thinks profound thoughts, for He is profundity itself; where profundity gains perfect expression in concrete existence, there the sense for profundity is superfluous. That is precisely what strikes me in the distinguished gentlemen whom I meet in Tsing-tau: they *live* Confucianism; what I regarded hitherto as a theoretical postulate is their very form of existence to them. All these statesmen take it as a matter of course that the organism of state rests on a moral basis, that politics are the external expression of ethics, and that justice is the normal emanation of good intentions; and it seems a matter of course to them, in quite a different sense from that in which the Sermon of the Mount does to the Christians: not as something which ought to be, but which happens only rarely, but as something which necessarily takes place. This brings about a fundamental difference. One always achieves what one does not doubt. I do not know the merits, as regents, of the governors with whom I conversed: it is certain, in any case, that they ruled in the Confucian spirit, which is to say from a moral basis. And this necessarily transfigured even their insufficiency.

For the first time I find myself in the presence of a human type whose deepest element is morality. Such a type does not exist in the West. It is possible that our Government officials have acquitted themselves better during the last hundred years than Chinese ones (for the integrity of our functionaries is not older than that, as a typical manifestation, even in Germany)—it is certain that the spirit from which they do so is not equivalent to that of the Chinese, no matter how much they fail in

practice. Our political culture is conditioned externally; it is the result of a system which forces the individual to good actions; it was called to life independently of the soul, and continues independently of it. The political culture of the Chinese depends upon the development of his inner self, and when one considers that the great Chinese Empire has hardly been governed worse for thousands of years than modern Europe is to-day, and that this has been done without the mediation of a machinery which automatically holds men in check, purely and solely thanks to the moral qualifications of its citizens, one must confess that the average level of moral culture must be extraordinarily high among Chinese *literati*. At any rate, it is extraordinarily high in the case of those with whom I have come in touch. And one can hear, through the most courteous remarks they make concerning the West, a certain surprise that the same is so little the case there. They regard us as moral barbarians. Our system is, of course, worthy of admiration, but the men, and their fundamental attitude . . . I am afraid these gentlemen are right. We Westerners have run ahead of life with our intelligence. Our moral superiority, of which we are so proud, seems up to the present little more than the functioning within the confines of a more than intelligently thought-out system; because this is so, we are rebelling of late even against morality in general. Which of the extreme manifestations of the social life of the West do not find their profoundest explanation in the fact that external manifestations are not rooted in internal realities? Tolstoyism and anarchism on the one hand, and, on the other, nationalism and racial fanaticism—they are all movements which want to substitute natural for artificial phenomena. We are inferior to our system. The Chinese stand above theirs. This is the success of education in the spirit of Confucius.

It gives me a great deal of food for thought that the practice of such simple principles as the Confucian ones can give men such superiority. I have never yet met with a perfect human being among European moral fanatics. But the cause of this difference is not far to seek: the principles of morals have always meant an external law to us, be it that God or authority,

or absolute practical reason opposed to nature, has imposed them upon us; Confucianism regards them as guiding lines, according to which a cultured individual acts necessarily and naturally. They think that it is in the nature of things that father and son, husband and wife, friend and friend, prince and subject, show each other faithfulness and benevolence; if man develops what is natural, morality is said to result of its own accord. The emphasis is thus laid on the perfect development of human nature. No one has any inner opposition to such categorical instruction; everybody wants to be cultured. Thus, the Chinese readily takes the trouble which the European youth, since the day that the spirit of antiquity died, hardly ever takes: he meditates on the *meaning* of morality. If he does so seriously and continuously, the correctness of the Confucian theory will some time or another be revealed to him. For it *is* a question of a man's power of differentiation, which can be increased by training, whether he inclines towards good or evil. Henceforward, wavering is no longer possible; moral nature has been awakened.—How much in education depends on its beginning and technique! The Chinese have not thought anything like as much as we have concerning morality; they have never seen in it such a high ideal as our (especially Protestant) ethical leaders have. But in practice they have attained much more.

✦

THESE gentlemen are, of course, conservative: what politically developed individual is not? The man who possesses a feeling for history, who knows that only organic growth leads upward, is never 'progressive' in the radical sense. In the intrinsic meaning of the word, only such a man, of course, is really progressive, for he alone feels reverence for appearance, which the radical sacrifices everywhere thoughtlessly to an abstract principle. Is it not highly significant that the workmen of Belgium and France have already condemned the idea of 'human right,' and only recognised the right of existence of their organised (technically 'conscious') comrades?

It must be admitted that the dignitaries whom I refer to are

not only conservative but decidedly reactionary. But how could a Confucian of the ancient type be in favour of innovation?—If the traditionally Chinese form of state, which was codified by Kung, is really alone in being in perfect harmony with the guide of the world, then the desire for innovation means nothing short of madness. Then the people can do nothing more wise than obey the old regulations strictly; then what we call 'standstill' has the same meaning as the perpetual rejuvenation of nature, which also proceeds within a changeless general frame. Then the eradication of the heretic really signifies the same as the elimination of the unfit in the struggle for existence. . . .

There are, of course, several things to be said against the form of state which the Tao is said to demand; and even more weighty considerations can be brought against the fundamental presupposition of the static (immutable) nature of the arrangement of the world, which makes all innovation appear opposed to sense. The world is actually in process of growth; no ready-made ideals underlie it, but ideals are created afresh at every new stage. For this reason the idea of an absolutely best form of the state includes, as such, a misconception: as long as the world remains in the making, that is to say, as long as it exists, any 'best possible form of state' is an impossible concept; every concrete ideal can apply only for a definite period and to a special place. But it is precisely the man who understands all this who will pay the greatest admiration to the Chinese conception of the world. It is not only that its universal and fundamental idea, according to which the processes of nature and the lives of men form a flawlessly interlaced system, is a grand idea; it is not only the consistency with which every individual phenomenon is being related back to it, it is perhaps a unique example of intending-to-be and being-in-earnest—seeing what the Chinese were like during the last thousands of years, one must admit that they could not have professed a better philosophy: it has stood the pragmatic test perhaps better than any other in the world. China is the only empire which has solved the social question for an extended period; the only one in which the mass of the popula-

tion was ever happy; and the only one which has ever embodied the absolute social and political ideal in the world of appearance. Since, moreover, the Chinese of to-day resemble their distant ancestors so that we could mistake them—how could a cultured Chinaman not be reactionary?

I too feel like a reactionary here. All the more so as I see considerable reason to fear that that which has made China, until to-day, worthy of admiration and reverence, will be lost together with the old order. The Chinese are, no doubt, not a nation of thinkers; their conscious thought seems to have moved more continuously on the surface than that of any nation of comparable culture and talents. However, living in accordance with profundity is more than harbouring deep thoughts, and that is what the Chinese have done to an incomparable degree until to-day; their traditional communal life has the same meaning as the sublime philosophy of the Indians has for them; their life was a direct expression of the Tao. How perfectly they have always solved the problem of happiness! Every coolie demonstrates in his life the eternal truth which our greatest men have preached to deaf ears, namely, that happiness is a question of inner attitude, and that it is not dependent upon external circumstances as such. The theory that the course of the world is incapable of being influenced is, of course, at fault; the fact that we have not acted in accordance with the principle of Mong Tse: 'It is better to wait until the weather is favourable than to acquire good implements for tilling the soil,' has made us into the masters of nature. But how dearly we have paid for this achievement! Since we know that the external world is changeable, we have transferred the problem of happiness, together with all others, into this realm, and this condemns us to hopeless misery until we change our ways. And so on and so forth. Every Chinaman until this day, no matter how superficially he may have thought, no matter how inappropriately he may have acted, demonstrated a deep philosophy in his life; he counted the outer world as something truly external, and sought essentials in other dimensions. In Europe only women do this; they are accordingly by far the profounder philosophers of life. For this very rea-

son women are typically conservative. In fact, if what is essential in no way depends on external circumstances, then it can easily appear more expedient to live in an unchangeable world, to which one has accommodated oneself once and for all, rather than having to adapt oneself anew again and again, without ever achieving a better general result in the process.

Is not everything which is enduring reactionary? Nature, as such, is reactionary; not merely because she knows nothing of progress with a definite aim—whenever she has been changed from without she reverts, as soon as she is left to herself, back to her original condition, and this, this alone, seems immortal in her. Perhaps this is the solution of the problem why Asiatic people are generally longer-lived than European ones: either the physiological element dominates in them, or else the mental element, thanks to a conservative attitude, has been so intimately related to the former that it has become second nature.

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HOW perfect is the courtesy of the cultured Chinaman! It is an æsthetic delight to have intercourse with him, in spite of the unusual technical difficulties which the code of Chinese politeness causes to a foreigner. The fact is that etiquette in itself renders intercourse more easy: it creates an equation between incongruous elements, an equation which is always soluble; it places the sinner and God, the beggar and the king, on the same level, and leads strangers along a level track towards mutual understanding. Before I met Chinamen I had made myself familiar with the fundamental rules of their code, and I now follow them as well as I can, and find, to my delight, that it works.

In the distinguished Chinaman, that most refined form of perfection seems to have been attained in which politeness, within the limits of custom strictly observed, has given appropriate expression to personality. How rarely one meets with this in modern Europe! I have observed something of similar value only in a few French Grand Seigneurs, and they were late-born sons of the eighteenth century. Whoever has good manners to-day is generally conventional and correspondingly

superficial. In order to realise the most personal content in objective form, one must be more cultured than education allows in present-day Europe. In China this is still possible, and for this reason the great men of this country stand on a higher level of culture than ours do. For the typical form is not opposed to perfect individual expression; on the contrary: individual expression generally precludes it. The more an art becomes perfect, the more classic does it become, which means that what is accidental and individual becomes sublimated into forms of general validity. The same is true of man. The more he becomes inward, profound, potentialised, the more do his personal elements retreat into the background, and the more generally human does his being appear to become. Thus, all truly great men have been types rather than individuals. Tolstoy is more of a Russian than a personality. Voltaire is more of a Frenchman than himself; and those mightiest men of all who have burst all local and national barriers, are, for this reason, not less, but more, typical in a wider sense: they are simply men, stylised according to an absolutely general formula: according to the formulas of saints, of men of action, of thinkers. Thus Christ calls Himself 'the son of man,' and Buddha 'the perfected one.' In precisely the same sense has courtesy, which means obedience to the most general form which controls desirable intercourse between men, proved itself, everywhere and at all times, as the best possible means of expression of a highly cultured personality.

How is it that this highest form seems to be attained by educated Chinese not exceptionally, but as a rule, whereas among us perfect Grand Seigneurs were scarce even in the seventeenth century? This is the work of two writings which have inspired all education for more than two thousand years in the Middle Empire: the Book of Reverence (*Hiau Ging*), and the real catechism of Chinese civilisation, the Book of Rites. The former bases the whole of morality (which, according to Chinese ideas, contains the whole of life within it) upon the principle of reverence. Like Goethe, Chinese wisdom sees in it that 'which no one brings into the world with him, that upon which everything depends, so that man shall become a man in

all directions'; like him, it represents it in three aspects: as reverence before that which is above us, that which is below us, and that which is like us; indeed, reverence before everything which exists appears to this outlook as the very basis of all virtue and all wisdom. And that is really what it is: one only does justice to that which one takes absolutely seriously. For this reason, politeness is not something essentially external, but the most elemental expression of morality: whereas virtue and kindness cannot fairly be demanded of everybody, the formal acceptance of another personality can be demanded. This gives its profound significance to courtesy. This significance, then, has been developed into a marvellous theoretical doctrine in the second-named volume, the Book of Rites, which, on the other hand, is founded upon it. It asserts that man can only become inwardly perfect if he expresses himself perfectly outwardly; he can only express what is most personal in him correspondingly if he obeys the forms which have proved themselves to be typical for the Chinese in the course of history. How infinitely beneficial it must be to be instructed in this manner from childhood! This equation is actually established through the fact that it is regarded as a matter of course that form symbolises its content, that the external gives expression to the internal; this happens in the case of talented people by creative understanding, in the case of the average man in the sense of Prussian military drill. This result is enhanced by other circumstances: the Chinaman has a fundamental sense for etiquette, and for this reason the practice of good manners meets only rarely with the opposition which is peculiar to the modern European youth; moreover, consideration is a vital question where the community ties the individual on all sides so that he cannot be regarded as his own master in any way, and sometimes even has to act 'objectively' where, according to our ideas, only subjectivity is in question. But no matter what empirical conditions may be at play: no matter how external the circumstances may be, at any rate in China the cultured individual appears to be more inward than anywhere else.

The marvellous courtesy which has delighted me during

these days is the flower of Confucianism, just as the thorough moral development of man signifies its root. Is this world conception not magnificent which knows how to bring all profundity to the surface? Which establishes a necessary equation, not only between moral and formal culture, between charm and dignity, but between gracefulness and seriousness, gracefulness and wisdom? This presupposed equation very naturally manifests itself perfectly only in the highly cultured individual; in the mass, externals predominate here, as everywhere else where culture has reached a similar height. Of all European people the French are socially the most cultured, and even among them forms have come to lead an existence which is ever more and more independent of its content; just as in China manners dominate which have no relation to ethical qualities, so a stupid Frenchman can seem clever simply because his language is so very intelligent. Now what is to be preferred, a perfect external civilisation which exists by itself and does not necessarily influence the individual, or perfect sincerity of the subject which, considering what men are to-day, leads to a condition of general barbarism? This question will be answered differently according to whether one's spirit is Catholic or Protestant. The Catholic-minded will stress the fact that the obedience to form which is objectively the best, no matter how external it may be, influences a man in the long run, so that it cannot be regarded as a misfortune if he does not appear sincere from time to time, because he will be educated up to a higher condition by this means; and he will reproach the Protestant with the fact that too much emphasis on straightforwardness, although it makes man momentarily free, really robs him of his future; he will maintain that the man who refuses to be determined by what is above him, and what cannot correspond to his being for that very reason, will never get beyond himself.—The man of Protestant proclivities, on the other hand, will judge sincerity to be absolutely superior, no matter how dearly one pays for it, because man can be advanced intrinsically only through his own experience, while no matter how imperfect an independently gained insight may be, it possesses more value in all circumstances than the very best

activity under the guidance of authority. He will, moreover, maintain that there can be no question of renouncing the future for the sake of the present, because, as success has proved, the Protestant people are precisely the most progressive. The Catholics are to-day exactly where they were hundreds of years ago, whereas the Puritans who, two hundred years ago, were barbarians, march to-day, as every one knows, at the head of civilisation. That is quite correct. Undoubtedly the culture of sincerity implies the more far-sighted policy, as compared with the culture of perfect form. But regarded from the angle of the given present, the former seems to be the more desirable. For it alone presents a picture of a perfection which has been attained, whereas the other only promises it for the future.

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MAY one describe the formal culture of China as exemplary? Unquestionably, if it is understood according to its spirit; the Chinese have transfused the surface with spirit more perfectly than all other people, and they have succeeded in producing the most complete fusion of form and significance. Again and again I come back to Confucius' picture of the 'Noble One,' whose profundity appears in his gracefulness: no demi-god could be more accomplished. Generally, profundity and attractiveness are mutually exclusive, just as primitive force and charm, ease and thoroughness are; it seems almost inconceivable that a man could combine within himself the advantages of the Germans and of Frenchmen. The Chinese in his highest manifestation really combines them within him. And even if he does not attain altogether to the profundity of the one or to the mobility of the other, if he is less brilliant, less delicate, if his natural disposition is not quite so rich as ours is in many cases, yet his cultured existence represents nevertheless a synthesis of humanity which has not been realised in an equally embracing form anywhere else.

In spirit, formal Chinese culture is undoubtedly exemplary; I, at any rate, could not conceive of any other which is more worthy of emulation. But then I ask myself: Is its realisation ultimately tied to Chinese peculiarities? Possibly. This world

is curiously constituted, in so far as it often requires a purely accidental conjunction in order to embody an eternal and generally valid meaning in appearance. Just as the poet is by no means the 'only true man,' as Schiller would have it, the man with the intensest experience, the strongest passions, but the one who happens to turn an accidental combination of talents into the mouthpiece of something which others often possess in a far deeper measure; just as the 'genius' is not a self-determined unit, but comes to exist through the coincidence of certain talents with definite historical factors, none of which would have brought about an inspired creation by themselves—in this way it may very well be that Chinese perfection, which, in its significance, represents an absolute climax, can only be presented in Chinese. Such a presentment, however, cannot be an example for us. For it requires a very special temperament to remain perfectly genuine while obeying a strictly prescribed ritual, and to evince genuineness while confining oneself consciously within the limits of one of the most rigid forms of life. This form of life is perhaps not quite as foreign to us as it seems: Englishmen are not very different. They generally do, think and wish the same thing and remain original at the same time; the Briton pronounces platitudes with the same power of conviction as Galileo once pronounced his *eppur si muove;* and the Briton is accordingly also by far the most perfect of all European men. But it is precisely when the similarity in principle between the Chinese and the British has been recognised that one must feel strong doubt whether the ideal of absolute perfection is capable of general realisation. One can become everything except an Englishman if one has not been born one; his characteristics are strictly conditioned by thousands of details, accidents, limitations and prejudices, more so than in the case of any other expression of European humanity; and only where these primary conditions are fulfilled do the advantages of the Englishman appear. In the same way, the individualistic culture of the Renaissance stood and fell with the predominance of extraordinary individuals. Thus it may very well be that the example of China too is inimitable.

I for my part do not regret this, for I believe but faintly in the general and all-sided progress of the human race, nor do I believe that it would be desirable. For whither would it lead? To progressive uniformity. It is better for us that our ideals experience short-lived realisation like lightning here and there, sometimes in antiquity, sometimes now and sometimes at any period, sometimes in China, sometimes in Greece, sometimes in Germany, so that we are mentally continually on the look-out; I say that this is better than that we should surrender ourselves, with cheap optimism, to the drift of time which is to lead us mechanically towards an ideal condition.

✦

I MUST, after all, turn my attention to the reverse of the Chinese culture of form: its external quality which on the whole distinguishes it to-day.

That it is external in general is a matter of course: it is impossible that perfect form can be the true expression even of the most highly cultured mass. The mass may be charming, considerate, polite and yet straightforward, but it cannot be straightforward and simultaneously polite in the courtly sense; it is beyond their power to fulfil so much form. Whence, however, the extreme character of Chinese externals? For they are indeed extreme. The average Chinese is so aware of what ought to be done that he reveals himself only exceptionally without any ulterior thought; he appears quite at his ease only where he feels absolutely secure; he is, throughout the whole of his life, as it were, his own master of ceremonies. Correspondingly, he only feels himself responsible for what happens externally, for the 'workings' of the ceremonial; the inner outlook does not belong to his domain, it seems unimportant to him. Nothing that has grown as a live being can ever be deduced as such; essentials escape justification. Still it will do no harm if I summarise briefly *in abstracto* the general causes which are at issue: the extreme nature of Chinese externalism is due to the fact that a people with a limited consciousness of individuality, with an extraordinary sense of

form, and with remarkable social talents, has existed in too many examples for thousands of years.

Imagine thousands upon thousands of peaceable, practical human beings crammed together into the smallest space and never able to escape from it. The only possibility of satisfactory mutual relations would depend upon the strict obedience to what seemed right to every one present. In intercourse what matters is not the attitude but its expression; not the true being, but semblance. In a commonwealth like the one which has been presupposed this would be the case especially. There would be no room at all for personal whims; only a life of strict conformity could possibly flourish as a general standard. If, moreover, an original tendency existed to perform the inevitable, then this would benefit the prestige of custom, which would further be supported by their sense for form. In this way the whole of their social life would soon be regulated according to objective forms, and it would have been externalised in this process. This trend of thought shows that the actual condition of Chinese society can be construed on an *a priori* basis. What does this prove? It proves how much it is in accordance with nature. In point of fact, we are closer to the Chinese than we believe. We are pleased to mock at the Chinese 'face,' the longing to preserve appearances above all; at the paradox of a man who bears the consequences of his wrong-doing without a murmur, as long as he can keep up the pretence that he is suffering innocently, or that his suffering is no suffering at all: exactly the same is true of ourselves. Among us too in social life everything depends upon reputation, public opinion, and on myths; in our case, social life causes externalisation everywhere. As soon as consideration of others affects behaviour at all, straightforwardness and faithfulness towards oneself recede into the background; as soon as the former becomes decisive, the latter exists no longer. The mere postulation of consideration as a value removes the sheer possibility of congruity between being and action, or between being and semblance. Let no one suggest that Christian love proves the contrary: it is just Christian love which is essentially lacking in consideration; it does not care a button for the feelings

of its neighbour; it wishes him well for the sake of good. We consider the feelings of our fellow-beings only in so far as we are bad Christians. Thus, Chinese society expresses what is typical only in an extreme, or, if you like, in a caricatured, form; the Chinese are not an eccentric people, they are only the most completely formed and the most consistent of men. And in a certain sense they are the most sincere. We all act constantly to ourselves; we all regard ourselves, in conscious self-deception, as different from what we know we are; we are all inwardly contented if, thanks even to the most dubious transaction, appearances are preserved before ourselves. We are only afraid of dissimulation before others. The self-development of the idea, as Hegel would say, has produced the quaint result, that we are straighter towards others than we are towards ourselves; that we are truthful from untruthfulness. The Chinese manner of acting in front of others as they do to themselves, seems, in comparison with our method, undoubtedly the more honest. Let no one imagine that I am merely joking here; I am perfectly serious. Any one who cannot believe in the greater uprightness of the Chinese should get hold of the newspapers in which they discuss their intimate affairs: I have never met with such a method of observation totally lacking in vanity, nor with such unreserved professionalism. When they mean to be honest, they are honest, not otherwise; we pretend to be always so.

The fact that the Chinese credit ceremonial with a significance which seems inordinate to modern men is also typical and not a proof of their eccentricity. The form no doubt plays a more important part in China than its content: but this is a state of affairs which we meet with everywhere at a certain stage of development. The more a people is still in a natural condition, that is to say, the simpler, the more primitive it would have appeared according to the theory of the eighteenth century, the more does ritual mean to it. This state of affairs assumes at first a more subtle aspect in the course of development; ritual becomes more complicated, more refined, until, at some moment, the point appears to be reached at which the individual revolts against the reputations created by the com-

munity, and he finally breaks the historical form. We Europeans have arrived at the last of the stages which have been sketched above, the cultured Chinese at the previous one, the one in which objective form has attained to its uttermost development. The Chinese represent this in classical typification, more classical even than the Frenchmen did in the Europe of the seventeenth century, whose condition resembles so remarkably that of the China of yesterday; they regard the form of all action really as its substance. Psychologically this attitude is based upon the fact that at first man is not a match for the things he has invented, and he therefore overestimates them accordingly—this applies to ritual as it does to machinery (the mechanical view of the world of to-day is psychologically equivalent to the ritualistic one); he regards them as independent entities, not merely as organs or means of expression of his own being. Biologically, however, this view is directly connected with the lack of individualisation of men at this stage. Where a man's class seems more in his own consciousness than man does himself, then the rules which apply to the community necessarily mean more to him than his personal equation; there the strict obedience of custom has the same metaphysical meaning that straightforward self-expression has among ourselves. This is interpreted variously, according to the mental capacity and culture of the people concerned: those who are mythically inclined, like the Indians, accord magical virtues to ritual, while people who are poorer in imagination, like the French, content themselves with regarding custom as the ultimate court of appeal. The Chinese have thought out the profoundest theory which could have been invented for this relation, profound less in the sense of understanding than in the more significant sense of its effect upon life: they have taught and professed the belief that obedience to objective forms necessarily leads the individual towards his personal perfection. The masses have remained external in spite of it, but to the higher average a road has thus been pointed out which leads, more surely if not more rapidly, to the goal than any which we have ever embarked upon.

The significance of ceremonial in China is a typical and not

an extraordinary phenomenon; it is typical of a society which is not highly individualised but possesses a high culture at the same time. The modern European finds some difficulty in taking such forms of life seriously. But if manifestations are to be taken seriously at all, then this applies to these too. For a metaphysician there is no difference between the forms which nature puts into the world and those created by the inventive imagination. As phenomena, both are equally real; from the point of view of significance both are one and the same. And if even the metaphysician cannot help considering this *chinoiserie* as somewhat grotesque, as a caricature of the generality of mankind, it strikes him simultaneously as raised to the level of a caricature of the whole creation. All definite manifestations can be regarded as prejudice; every one, regarded from some point of view, appears grotesque. It is a question of one's mood, of one's momentary whim, whether one feels inclined to smile at man as such, this strange, hybrid creature, or whether the peculiar ceremonies which he observes when expressing his greetings awaken our ridicule. . . .

40

THROUGH SHANTUNG

THE greatness of China takes hold of and impresses me more and more. It is a universe by itself, essentially greater than any other empire which I have ever entered, and I well understand by now that its inhabitants are not inclined to take the rest of the world very seriously. At times I am reminded of Russia, that other gigantic empire which will always appear great, no matter what may happen to it: what is this common quality, of which I am so acutely conscious in spite of all the differences? I do not quite know; but I believe that it is the grandeur of the scale which differentiates China in the same way from all the countries of the East as Russia from those of the West. There is nothing wider, nothing more encompassing, than the 'brown plain,' and it is reflected in the smallest manifestations. The true Russian son of the soil

is essentially (even if not always actually) a big and broad-minded nature. In the same way, the open, clearly outlined Chinese landscape is monotonous, rhythmic and great, and its inhabitants bear the same stamp. The Chinaman too gives essentially an impression of bigness, no matter how dry and philistine he may often be, for a tremendous unity is at the bottom of his *chinoiserie*. The very expressive term *chinoiserie* awakens at first an image of something small and petty, just as the corresponding image in Burma, Siam and Japan actually bears a petty character. In China one feels the substance of the powerful soul of a great people through every arabesque, and its power is uncannily seductive. I know for certain that in the long run, it would take possession of me completely, as it has taken possession already of so many.

The substantiality of the Chinese strikes one all the more because his surface often betrays a nature which our European imagination finds difficult to harmonise with the idea of profundity; whatever is pretty, dainty, graceful and finicky seems superficial to us. The Chinaman, however, is profound, perhaps the profoundest of all men. No one is rooted so deeply in the order of nature, no one is so essentially moral; and externals mean to no one as much as they do to him. Only profound men are capable of taking forms so seriously.

But the quality which gives its unique weight to Chinese profundity is that it is profundity turned flesh; it is, as it were, spiritualised gravity. The spirit of the masterpieces of early Chinese art wears a more powerful body than anywhere else. How overpowering is the oppression produced by early Chinese images of Buddha! They breathe a measure of strength which a god would have to possess in order to appear as a god upon earth. Something of this power is innate in every Chinaman. China as a whole, however, is inspired by it through and through.

Whoever wants to do justice to China must keep in his mind's eye simultaneously its *chinoiserie*, the greatness of the empire and the fundamental vital power of its inhabitants. He must survey Chinese courtesy together with the grandeur of Chinese nature. How little does intrinsic greatness, after all,

depend upon the accident of opportunities for expression! This greatness is solely determined by being. China has remained great although it has generally been vanquished in war, although it has rarely been a strong political entity, and would remain great even if one day it were to be dismembered.

✦

I AM in Asia now. I am no longer in that Orient which extends from Greece via Egypt, Asia Minor and Persia, to India and Southern China; I am in the Asia which begins in Russia and comprehends all the people of this wide inland region in one grandiose unity. Psychologically the Russian is more closely related to the Indian than to the Chinaman; in many ways the Russian soul is in tune with that of the old Indian; the fundamental relation to God and to nature of both peoples is the same. But the background of the Russian, on the other hand, is identical with that of the Chinaman. The background of all Asiatics is that of concrete infinity, the infinity of space and of time. That is something which no European, no Indian possesses. If one compares a distinguished German with a Russian of equal eminence, one is struck by the ampler background against which the latter stands out: that is the Asiatic quality in him. There is never more than his history behind the European, which, of course, when it is great, rich and significant, gives him a relief which no other man possesses. But this background is always a finite one, and the clearest contours do not take the place of width. At the back of the Oriental stand legends or fairy-tales: they represent more in so far as possibility is always more than reality; it is less, as they are susceptible of doubt. For this reason the Oriental seems always somehow unreal; he produces the effect of a *quasimodogenitus* who is simultaneously infinitely old. The background of the Asiatic is immeasurable nature, the endless process of the world. In this way the Indian has understood man, but his recognition has never been translated into life. Nature, which he has understood so deeply, has hardly existed for him *in concreto*. How tremendously it exists for the Russian! No one is so much at one with her as the simple Mujik, no artist has represented man so plastically in his at-one-ness with the whole

of life as Leo Tolstoy. The delicate soul of the Slav is in immediate sympathy with the universe which serves as its background. The matter-of-fact Chinaman possesses no capacity for sympathy in this sense; but his living background is the same. In his case, the case of the social genius, the feeling for the world's significance manifests itself in the regulation of life. Who else would ever have hit upon the idea of conceiving as one indivisible whole the ceremonies performed by the Son of Heaven, and the alternation of the seasons of the year as the normal evolution of social life? Who else has understood the latter with anything like equal profundity? To the Chinaman, in his own way, it seems self-evident that everything is correlated. The Asiatics have never regarded man and nature as alien, they have conceived the former as a part of the latter. How moving it is in *Anna Karenina* that the death of the heroine is not judged and presented in any other way than the previous death of the noble race-horse! How much style does its non-anthropomorphic character give to Chinese art! While a picture of exceeding beauty is produced when nature appears projected upon the surface as it was by Homer and Goethe, greater depth of insight is required not to differentiate between man and nature, and to understand both from within as an indissoluble whole.

41

TSI NAN FU

NEVER before have such impressive pictures of country life been unfolded before me as on this journey through inner China. Every inch of soil is in cultivation, carefully manured, well and professionally tilled, right up to the highest tops of the hills, which, like the pyramids of Egypt, slope down in artificial terraces. The villages, built of clay and surrounded by clay walls, have the effect of natural forms in this landscape: they hardly stand out against the brown background. And wherever I cast my eyes, I see the peasants at work, methodically, thoughtfully, contentedly. It is they who everywhere

give life to the wide plain. The blue of their jerkins is as much a part of the picture as the green of the tilled fields and the bright yellow of the dried-up river-beds. One cannot even imagine this flat land devoid of the enlivening presence of these yellow human beings. And it represents at the same time one great cemetery of immeasurable vastness. There is hardly a plot of ground which does not carry numerous grave mounds; again and again the plough must piously wend its way between the tombstones. There is no other peasantry in the world which gives such an impression of absolute genuineness and of belonging so much to the soil. Here the whole of life and the whole of death takes place on the inherited ground. Man belongs to the soil, not the soil to man; it will never let its children go. However much they may increase in number, they remain upon it, wringing from Nature her scanty gifts by ever more assiduous labour; and when they are dead, they return in child-like confidence to what is to them the real womb of their mother. And there they continue to live for evermore. The Chinese peasant, like the prehistoric Greek, believes in the life of what seems dead to us. The soil exhales the spirit of his ancestors, it is they who repay his labour and who punish him for his omissions. Thus, the inherited fields are at the same time his history, his memory, his reminiscences; he can deny it as little as he can deny himself; for he is only a part of it. —What do all the country idylls, from the *Georgics* to *Hermann und Dorothea,* amount to by the side of this epopee?

I am reminded of Laotse's stanza:

> Man has the earth for image,
> The earth has the sky for image,
> The sky has significance for image,
> And significance has itself for image.

According to Chinese conceptions, heaven and earth, the events of the world and the life of men, morality and the normal course of nature, form one single connected whole. Heaven stands above the earth, and the earth stands above men. The peasant is the man who is most strictly subjected to it. But

for this very reason he forms the basis of the whole. If he does not carry out his duty rigidly, then the state, as well as heaven, begins to totter. He thus acquires a dignity possessed by no other being in the world. Every political philosophy will credit the peasant with dignity; the highest is always borne by the lowest, the most highly differentiated by the amorphous mass; this is in the nature of things. For the Chinese, however, this dignity has a special and very wonderful significance; their spirit stipulates a living and not merely a mechanical connection between every part of the universe and as a result the highest appears not only based, but mirrored, in the lowest; the Chinese peasant could, if he knew how to think and feel, regard himself as the bearer of heaven. Where else has the dull existence of the mass been raised to the mirror of conscious wisdom? Where else has the instinctive routine of life been elevated to the image of spiritual harmony? This implies an organisation of life which has never been excelled in significance. And this great significance has, as always happens when it is truly great, even transfigured appearance where it was hardly understood. The connection which Chinese mythology postulates is actually realised in life. The differentiated organs, in particular the emperors, have failed frequently: the Chinese peasant has always been, and is to-day, exactly as he ought to be. This shows one to what an extent it lies within the power of the mind to raise the world above itself. How blind those naturalists are who deny and reject ideals which cannot be proved to be originally in accordance with nature: whether they are originally in accordance with her or not, they can become so. Spirit sows its ideals into matter, and when the seed has sprung up and become mature, then the whole world appears transformed.

We Europeans are far ahead of China in the control of nature, but life, as a conscious part of it, has found there its highest expression hitherto. And, after all, we are parts of nature; whether as rulers or as subjects—the fundamental synthesis remains the same. The Chinaman is fully conscious of this synthesis, and we are not; to this extent he stands above us.

42

PEKIN

I SPENT my first hours of the late afternoon in Pekin at the Temple of Heaven. The gigantic marble altar towers up from the wide, desolate expanse of sand, surrounded by a few dusky pines. Every now and again one hears the cawing of a crow; the district is as if deserted by man. One feels that history interferes here only at the turning-point of events. The building is exceedingly sober, but of marvellously noble proportions. Its pure and spiritualised beauty is most impressive in the midst of these wild surroundings. It draws the spirit away from what is physically powerful and oppressive and points it irresistibly upwards towards heaven. All over the snowy stone the emblem of the dragon has been chiselled. The dragon is the primary image of the beginning of creation, the first ethereal form into which significance has been condensed. The dragon is the symbol of all-penetrating, omnipresent fluidity, of eternal rejuvenation, of perpetual change; it is the symbol of the first principle of the soul, and therefore of eternity. It is the spirit of the dragon which has erected the Temple of Heaven; it is a springboard from which to reach the sky, not a symbol of earthly gravity.

I was in the right mood when I came. The picture of peasant-life on the way there had prepared me for the full understanding of that which represents the extreme human link in the cosmic cohesion. The emperor upon the dragon throne is, as emperor, more than a man: he is the tie which unites heaven and earth, just as the peasant is the link which joins the earth to man. Thus he bears the responsibility for nature. A well-observed ritual vouches for the normal sequence of the seasons of the year; if the rain which the farmer needs comes too late, then the emperor must do penance remorsefully. His might and his position vouch for the harmonious function of creation, his character vouches for that of his ministers, his behaviour for that of his subjects. Thus, his right of autocracy is simultaneously all-embracing responsibility which conditions and

limits him strictly. He is responsible not only to God, like the European autocrats of long ago, who could rule men according to their whims, he is not responsible only to men in the modern sense: he is responsible in the sense of the main mechanism of a watch. If the watch goes badly, the fault is always apparent in the main mechanism, but not in such a way that the watch might go badly and that its main wheel might fail, but feel quite comfortable for the rest: if the main mechanism is out of order, then it suffers first; it comes to a standstill by itself or else it breaks. Thus the dynasty which does not know how to rule must disappear sooner or later—it will either die out of its own accord, or it will be removed.

What a wonderful conception! How infinitely higher than the conceptions of rule by divine Right, of God's vicarage, or that of the divine character of the ruler, such as the Roman Cæsars arrogated to themselves! It is the only conception which has solved satisfactorily the problem of the co-existence of absolute sovereignty with absolute practical responsibility. The Son of Heaven is mightier than any prince, for he even stands above Nature. But at the same time, he seems as limited as any responsible minister in a modern democracy, for he only signifies a special organ of a body which is cohesive on all sides, and in order to exist and to operate he is dependent upon all the other organs. Thus, the autocrat must allow himself to be advised by the wisest of the nation, he must take the will of the people into consideration and strive unswervingly after good. If he reigns from motives of selfishness, he thus cuts off his own possibility of existence. This marvellous conception of the calling and the position of a ruler of men is the logical consequence of that general outlook on the world which characterises the Chinese more than anything else. According to this view, the laws of morality and nature belong to one single unified system. Identical laws rule moral behaviour, the sequence of the seasons and the change of day and night; it is a single, all-embracing cohesion, which rounds off into harmonious unity the non-human and the human, the organic and the inorganic, the natural and the moral qualities. Moral force, however, is the primary one! The Tao is qualified

morally. Morality really means self-realisation. Accordingly, nature stands in danger of sinking back from cosmos into chaos if men fail to do their natural duty—if the father is not a good father, the husband not a good husband, the ruler not a good ruler, the subject not a good subject—and if they do not practise assiduously the five heavenly virtues (justice, magnanimity, politeness, insight and the faithful execution of duty). Thus even no emperor has the right to change anything in the existing order if his moral character does not qualify him for this task. On the other hand, if his character is as it should be, then everything runs smoothly of its own accord. In the Chong-yong it is written: 'No sooner has the Emperor set his person in order than all duties towards him are fulfilled, no sooner does he pay due reverence to the wise men than he will differentiate with unerring correctness between error and truth, good and evil; no sooner does he show to his parents the love which he owes them than all strife will cease between his uncles, between his older and his younger brothers; as soon as he honours his ministers according to their deserts, the business of state will prosper; as soon as he treats his subordinate officials correctly, the *literati* will fulfil their functions at the ceremonies with appropriate zeal. As soon as he loves his people like his son, this people will strive to emulate him; as soon as he has gathered together scholars and artists at his court, his riches will be put to the right use; as soon as he receives strange visitors in a friendly manner, men will flow together from the four corners of the world in his empire in order to participate in its blessings.' Moral force is the fundamental force of the world; as soon as it can assert itself duly everything else is regulated of its own accord. Kant spoke of two things which filled his heart with ever-new reverence: the starry sky above him and the moral law within him. For the Chinese the heavenly cosmos itself is an expression of moral law.

It seems absurd to us to find one denomination for the laws of nature, which are fulfilled necessarily whenever anything happens, and for moral commandments which ought to be fulfilled but which are generally disregarded. In connection

with this it must be remembered that the Chinaman who believes in this conception of the world does not know any laws of nature in our sense of the word; he judges from the point of view of the farmer, according to whose typical view Nature fails in her duties more frequently than she fulfils them; inanimate activity is predetermined no more simply for him than the actions of living beings, which demonstrably take this or a different course according to the character of the men concerned. Thus it is by no means irrational that he traces the order of the world and the order among men back to a common cause.

Moral force as the primary force of the world manifests its influence directly; particular action is not required. Therefore, it is handed down concerning the greatest emperors of China that they—did not rule. Kung-Fu-Tse said: Sublime was the way in which Shun and Yu ruled the earth, without doing anything to it. Laotse:

If a very great man rules, then the people only know that he
is there,
Lesser men are loved and praised, still lesser men are feared,
Still lesser men are despised.
If one does not trust enough,
One does not meet with trust.

How thoughtful they were in the choice of their words!

Tasks were accomplished, work was done,
And all the people thought:
'We are independent.'

Moral value is all that the true ruler needs for government. Even the convulsed China of to-day is in reality ruled only by moral prestige and by the general reverence of the people for that which stands above them. How insignificant is its machinery! The Mandarins have at their disposal neither military force nor police in order to carry out their orders, which are yet obeyed most readily. The prestige of their dignity is sufficient,

for it is presupposed that it corresponds to their value, and that it guarantees the reverence for what stands below them. How marvellous is the idea of such a government! It is the highest which can be conceived. If a people were perfectly cultured, no institutions would be needed, for everything would adjust itself of its own accord. The more cultured a people is the more can it rely upon the value of the individual, the less does it require any machinery. In England the judges are real independent rulers; they create the law; and this system has proved its worth because the men concerned stand on the necessary level. In Germany such powers cannot yet be given to the judges; strictly defined rules are necessary there. In Russia control of each application and interpretation of justice is required. In China the feeling for morality has gained the greatest development hitherto; it is *the* fundamental trait of this nation. And there, in idea at any rate, conditions are possible which seem superhuman to the Westerner.

Is there no machinery which a ruler necessarily requires for purposes of government? Yes; the machinery he requires consists in the rites. And here, wonderfully profound, the eternally human ends once more in *chinoiserie*. No authorities, and hardly any laws, are necessary; all life is organised of its own accord. But if the emperor should commit an error of etiquette during the great annual sacrifice on the altar of heaven, then even the best-regulated world would suddenly become chaotic.

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THE streets of Pekin are not as beautiful or picturesque as those of the metropolises of Southern and Central China. They are on a grander scale to make up for it (which does not only refer to physical breadth), and the air of the steppes blows through them. The spirit of Jenghis-Khan, of the great Manchu and Tartar conquerors, not that of the Chinese *literati*, has given this town its character; its effect is therefore powerful and austere. Pekin is, above all, an Imperial city: this makes it seem more like Delhi and St. Petersburg than the nearby Tientsin and Tsi-Nan Fu.

These gigantic gateways, these massive walls, these towering palaces and pagodas are an equal number of tokens of the seat of rulers. As I wander along the great distances which separate monument from monument and take in the greatness of the spirit of Chinese imperial power, I am overcome by an increasingly hostile mood against the new republican state. How out of place it is here! Why have the Chinese introduced it? They will not become freer by it; America is not as free as they were. The local community, the social atom of China, was absolutely independent in its management. It chose its own leaders, attended to its own business, and hardly paid any regular taxes at all; the sums which the Mandarins from time to time squeezed out of them were infinitesimally small compared with what they will have to find regularly in future. The old government did not interfere at all in the daily life of its subjects; it remained inactive until action appeared absolutely necessary. Then, of course, it did often prove itself unjust, extortionate and cruel, but this was due to the individual officials, not to the principle, which, as such, was admirable. There were, moreover, in monarchic China no privileged classes, no aristocracy; for thousands of years every individual had an open road to the highest offices. Nowhere else in the world was government less oppressive, in fact it was hardly noticeable, and nowhere have fewer official difficulties crossed the path of private initiative. The fact that the individual in China was, in spite of it, less free than in our world, was due to the inherited social order, not to the system of government, and if the former was to be changed, this could have been done just as well or just as badly under the old régime. Why, then, the revolution?—I suppose it was necessary, for the Manchus had exhausted the range of their possibilities: they had come to a point at which the spirit of the Chinese constitution directly demanded a change of dynasty. It is inevitable in a system whose efficiency is guaranteed exclusively by the quality of its representatives that as soon as the latter deteriorates the most undesirable conditions soon manifest themselves. For whether it is right or not that a good ruler is necessarily served by good officials—it is certain that a bad em-

peror, under the Chinese form of government, inevitably drives the state coach astray, for here there is no fixed machinery which could hold personal circumstances in balance. Thus a revolution had to come. But the fact that this revolution meant more than the usual crises in the Chinese organism, that it led to the collapse of the whole system, is due to external circumstances, especially to the infectious example of the West. And it will inevitably turn out to the disadvantage of the Chinese people if their common sense and their profound social and political culture do not prevent them from emulating the mistakes of the West.

I am not an enemy of the idea of a republic. I admit unconditionally that if people were perfectly cultured it would embody the best of all forms of the state. But at the stage at which even the most advanced peoples of our day have arrived, it leads to the opposite of that which it is to bring about: to the rule of the incompetent, instead of that of the best; to enslavement in the place of liberation; and instead of raising the general level it lowers it.

It does not bring about rule by the best elements because the uncultured individual is never inclined to recognise that any one is superior to him. He prefers to choose a man for his lord whose equal he considers himself to be; just as the Americans, with refreshing candour, admit openly that they do not wish to have distinguished representatives in their Congress, because such men would not represent the people. Only the prominent individual, who is not more important but more cunning than his electors, the demagogue, the intriguer, the opportunist, has any hope of gaining command of the rudder in a republican régime. Therefore, the leaders of such states lack precisely what the cardinal virtues of the ruler consist of: superiority. They are never free inwardly, they never have the calm power of surveillance which distinguishes the born leader of men. They simply are not independent, they have to ingratiate themselves with the electorate and the Press. And what is already true of the chiefs applies, in an even higher degree, to their followers. Robert de Jouvenel, in his very amusing book *La republique des camarades*, has shown that the French Par-

liament of to-day does not represent the people in any way, but that it is a completely independent parasitical organism which lives in its midst, whose component parts are, on the other hand, absolutely dependent upon each other and must, therefore, consider each other in the first instance; hence they are only exceptionally in a position to think of the welfare of the state at all: in principle the same is true of all republics, and it is only a question of time how far the principle becomes actualised. Superiority and independence are not, so long as men remain what they are to-day, capable of continued existence in republics.

I said, moreover, that the republican form of government brings about, not liberation, but enslavement. Its introduction involved everywhere, originally, liberation from some kind of slavery, but only in order to result in a new and more evil variety. All republicans start from the false assumption that men are originally equal; thus the feeling for superiority in the citizens of such communities is eradicated artificially. The wise man possesses no more prestige than the average person, the distinguished personality no more than the plebeian. A responsible post is not given to the man who by nature is fitted for it, but to any one at random, or to a man of cunning. Thus personalities offer no guarantee for the functioning of the body of the state. What is to be done? The dead machine must be strengthened; it must vouch for everything which would otherwise be due to the intrinsic value of human beings. For this reason we find extreme democracies marked without exception by the machine-like quality of their activity. I wrote yesterday that the significance of a political system was in direct relation to the lack of culture of the subjects; whereas the English judge creates laws, the German may only apply them. Accordingly, the machinery seems absolutely omnipotent in extreme democracies, where the best individuals can hardly make themselves felt. This is notably the case in the North American republic. There the caucus possesses more power than any Asiatic despot, and as the machine has no soul its tyranny is worse than that of the most cruel autocrat.

The third point is the lowering of the level which republicanism inevitably brings about; it results almost completely from what has been considered already. While incompetence is esteemed as much as competence, while the feeling for superiority becomes blunted and every one is ready to grant leadership only to his equals, superiority actually retrogresses and the general level falls to that of the lower elements; all the more so as the examples of a higher life become progressively more rare, and the supply of ideally minded citizens becomes reduced. The development of as great superiority as existed in aristocratic periods is not possible in democratic communities —and this includes to-day all the states, even with a monarchical government—because wherever the masses are considered at all, very great individuals are not able to exist; but in monarchies the level does not descend as far as in republics, where every one may have his say. Here the mass omnipotently creates the spirit of the age, and as it is this spirit which is communicated to each new generation, it is inevitable that each succeeding generation becomes more trivial than the preceding one. There is another weighty consideration against republics: it is related to the right of each individual to partake in political decisions. The interest in politics is elevating only to the man who regards it as a great ideal task, that is to say the born ruler, the professional statesman, and the all too rare citizen with a real sense for the commonweal; all other people are deteriorated by it. Why? In small things every one is mean; personal interests determine his action. As a co-ruler of a republic, the individual becomes mean on a large scale. He sees personal interest everywhere and acts accordingly. Under absolute rule it does not pay the private individual to concern himself with the larger issues of politics. For this reason self-interest there flourishes least; even in the most constitutional monarchy, there must be a few problems which do not concern him. In a republic, every one partakes in decisions about everything.

China was free and will become enslaved, the level of the people will sink, and the 'canaille' will take the place of the

intelligentsia—unless China, happier than Europe and America, evades the danger at the last moment. How foolish it is to hope for a rise in the general level from the introduction of a republic! Of course, the difference between a coolie and a Mandarin is inordinate, and the former must be raised. But this will certainly not be brought about by emancipating him suddenly and allowing him to outvote his superiors. And even if intellectual development is to gain, moral development will certainly lose. But moral education is the most important factor for every people, and the Chinese of all nations possess this quality in the greatest measure. How superior the coolie seems in this way to the haughty foreigner whom he carries and drives about! Or the hungry peasant to the missionary who presumes to preach to him! How superior, above all, is the Mandarin of the old régime compared with the impudent youngsters who are at the head of the empire to-day! I think back to the days which I spent in Tsing-tau with the exiled leaders of bygone times: there was hardly one among them who, in spite of all his possible faults, could not be regarded as morally thoroughly cultured; who to this extent did not seem fitted to occupy a prominent position. Not long ago they were rich and mighty, now they are homeless and poor, and yet they bear their fate with smiling equanimity. I have seen them in despair, and even in tears: but that was out of sadness at the end of the great civilisation of China which they saw approaching. . . .

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A FRANTIC sandstorm is raging; the sand-drift fills the streets. The Mongols whip their mules in order to reach a place of refuge more quickly; the Chinese in the rickshaws wear sheets in front of their eyes which cling, under pressure of the sand-laden wind, like dirty grease paint to their faces. There is no possibility of going to see anything. I spend my time in reading the history of Tsu-Hsi, the great dowager empress.

This empress, who, according to our standard, was the most horrifying, ruthless tyrant, to whom men were no more sacred than flies, who had one of her ladies-in-waiting drowned with-

out further ado because her entrance had disturbed her while painting—was regarded by her people as a kind-hearted, in fact as an all too kind, female; I heard this opinion only to-day from a Mandarin who had served under her. Undoubtedly she possessed a big nature, and big people are never bad; she intended the best, she fulfilled her duties as a ruler to the best of her conscience; the great traditions of ancient China were alive in her to an extraordinary degree. She was a masterful regent, a marvellous connoisseur of men, simultaneously a real artist and perfectly educated in classic literature. And yet one cannot say that she was good; she was a dragon, not a lamb. That she continues to live beneath the halo of kind-heartedness is very significant, for it has undoubtedly deeper causes than that typical metamorphosis wrought by memory, thanks to which even Napoleon is occasionally praised as a good and kindly person.

The main cause of this is probably the psychological intuition, the feeling for the essence of a human being which characterises all Asiatics and above all the Chinese. From the moment I reached India I had to admire the certainty with which the Easterner applies an appropriate gauge to every one instinctively. This ability is due, in general (if I disregard special empirical conditions), to his belief in types; for we too were better psychologists as long as we looked primarily not for the special components but for the type of a soul. For the man who does so must perceive synthetically, he must see the individual elements in their correlation, and this correlation must appear as primary compared with its elements. Thus, the intelligent Asiatic takes it as a matter of course that he judges the actions of another man, not by himself, but according to what they mean in reference to the man concerned. The mind of Tsu-Hsi was undoubtedly noble. She committed murder either because it seemed to her politically necessary, or because she did not see anything evil in it (no Chinese regards the process of conveying people from life to death as anything extraordinary), or finally, because she had not learned to resist her impulses. Her subjects had complete understanding for these circumstances. They understood that violence, in the case

of people in the higher and the highest positions, does not necessarily mean more than an angry shrug of the shoulders in the case of a lowly individual. They knew, moreover, how difficult it is to remain controlled in the fulness of power, and they therefore made less demands upon their emperors than upon their equals. The Chinese are tolerant from understanding, tolerant to the point of lack of character. This explains why precisely this people, whose world philosophy rests on a moral basis more than that of any other, who recognise no one as juridically fit to govern unless he is also morally qualified for the task, nevertheless tolerate more bad government in practice than any other nation of a comparable level of civilisation. The Chinese do not believe that men can be perfect; they doubt the possibility of the flawless functioning of any institution. They look sceptically upon any improvement; they take it as a fact that high officials incline towards violation and low ones towards chicanery, and they are content if abuses and evils do not exceed a certain limit, which they silently recognise as inevitable. What a high official said to me the other day with regard to the famous 'squeeze' was very characteristic: one should differentiate between 'pure squeeze' and 'dirty squeeze'; the man who extorted only as much as he needed to keep himself in decency (for the official salaries are insufficient for this purpose) could not be reproached at all; and only he was evil who exceeded the reasonable minimum. The Chinese find their very corrupt régime bearable just because they understand so much and expect so little of men. They place significance everywhere above fact. For this reason their system, no matter how badly it works in practice, seems to them better than ours, whose practical advantages they do not deny, because the significance of theirs is on a higher level. Theirs is based upon a moral foundation, ours is not; and this is the decisive consideration. Whether the officials are actually moral has little to do with the matter, however desirable it would be. And finally, they demand of their government, in the last instance, only one thing: authority. Authority pure and simple. This is the logical consequence of their ideal of non-government. Any authority is better than none at all, and a bad one is better

than a good one in so far as it is better justified according to its meaning.

The boundless respect of the Chinese for law and order brings with it simultaneously a surrender to occasional irregularities. It cannot be denied that experience speaks for, not against, the appropriateness of this point of view. In this gigantic empire, in which radical measures have never yet been taken against existing abuses, more continuous order has reigned on the whole than in all states managed with greater energy; in this country without police, with authorities of dubious integrity, there is on the whole less theft, murder, breach of faith, quarrels and bickerings than in the well-organised German Empire. Nevertheless, I must agree with those who find most unsympathetic the peculiarities of the Chinese who guarantee the functioning of this state. The Chinese middle classes lack moral courage, they seem utterly incapable of heroism; they never risk their own skins; they prefer to tell a lie rather than speak the truth if the truth could cause them any inconvenience. The Chinese is the prototype of the utilitarian. And he is consciously proud of the fact. This is true not only of the bourgeois: Laotse says of the masters of antiquity:

Hesitating like the man who traverses a river in winter,
Cautious as the man who fears his neighbours on all sides,
Reticent, like visitors,
Simple, like unused material,
They were wide as profundity,
They were impenetrable as opacity.

And further:

It is their nature to love retreating.

The so-called noble and gallant virtues cannot flourish where the world is regarded as unchangeable and where harmony *à tout prix* means the ideal. The man who professes a static conception of the world is not ready to face death for any ideal,

he does not strive to change the world, he only takes given data into account. He who thinks and acts in this way can certainly not be noble. Is it not profoundly ironical that it is the Chinese who, precisely thanks to his unsympathetic peculiarities, has given the highest example of social order, attained the greatest social culture, and literally solved the social question for a long period? Will not 'progress' make us also progressively less noble, since growing order and security of life must also increase the value of the ideal of security?

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NO, the new system as such will not regenerate China. It has been shown that the condition of France has hardly changed at all, in spite of all revolutions and alterations in its régime, since the days of Louis XIV, and the fundamental thesis of Gustave Le Bon's philosophy of history, that 'les peuples sont gouvernés, non par leurs institutions mais par leur caractère,' expresses a fundamental truth of general validity. The abuses in China can only be removed by the spirit of its possible perfection; its own specific perfection, not that of a foreign civilisation. It may well take over our machinery, our institutions, our schools, our methods; they will do good service even in China. But they will only do so when it is found possible to bring them into inner relation with the spirit of China's ancient culture.

It becomes clearer to me every day that if China is in need of reform it is not because of the old system as such, but because the old spirit has disappeared from it. No matter whether an ideal state of affairs ever existed such as is traditionally reported of the days of Yao, Shun and Yu—even Confucius and Mencius complained of decadence!—China has for centuries been nearer to its ideals than any historical nation, and the spirit which made this possible once upon a time is still alive within it to-day. Only it has grown exceedingly weak. The most distinguished Chinese are too highly bred; they lack virile strength; they wail and moan where they ought to act. At the same time, what a difference lies between them and the class whom the revolution has placed at the helm!

These are without any moral basis, without roots in the profoundest sense of the word. They lack, like the Russian anarchists and nihilists, all sense of historical evolution, and they will therefore be able to destroy, but never to build up again. A regeneration of China, I am convinced, is conceivable only in the spirit of Confucianism. May God grant that it still possesses the requisite strength!

Unfortunately, the spirit of Confucianism, which preserves what exists at its highest level like no other, is very little suited to renovation. I lunched yesterday with an old priest, who was glowing with enthusiasm for his religion, who saw in it the salvation of the whole of mankind, and who traced the downfall of China exclusively to the deterioration of Confucianism. I suggested to him that he should step forth and shake the people from their coma with inspiring words. He replied that he was not fitted for such a task; this was the business of the emperor and of the highest authorities; the condition into which he had been born confined his attention to the faithful fulfilment of his duties towards his parents and his family. And, he added, if all sons showed their fathers' piety, then everything else would work perfectly of its own accord. Once more this hopelessly static attitude, according to which everything in the world is in perfect equilibrium, and which cannot even conceive of an accelerating motive, a motive which might transmute a low condition of equilibrium into a higher one! How is the world to be rejuvenated subject to such assumptions? It can only be regenerated of its own accord. If every one fulfils his immediate duty, a molecular transposition is brought about in the system of the world which slowly leads to the highest condition of equilibrium. This path has all the advantages of a process of growth; once it has led to a maximum of good results, then this stands on a firmer basis than could be brought about by any other method; hence the incredible length of the great periods in China, hence the marvellously solid structure of the Chinese state even to-day. But such a process requires a tremendous amount of time, while, under modern conditions, all development, thanks to the record established by Europe and to the new circumstances which its

influence has created, must take place very rapidly if it is to lead to any goal at all; in fact, the mere possibility of its perfection in such circumstances is questionable. What, then, is to be done? I am certain that the process of rejuvenation should proceed from the spirit of Confucianism, in spite of everything enumerated above; this spirit is rooted so deeply and inwardly in the race that it would not be possible to substitute another for it. It would, moreover, be a crime to attempt its eradication, for in idea it is the highest which has ever formed the basis of any society. Nothing more ideal could be conceived than a community whose outer order was entirely guaranteed by the moral culture of its members, in which mechanical means were superfluous; this is not only the early Chinese ideal, it is the ideal of humanity. We too will one day, if God helps us, come to be regarded as Confucians in this sense. But, of course, new and accelerating motives will have to be embodied in traditional Confucianism.

This should not be incapable of execution, granted some degree of insight on the part of the leaders. Confucius stands at such an immeasurable height in the eyes of the people that they would permit any further idealisation of him. In fact, they would be highly satisfied if it were to be demonstrated to them that the new ideas, whose efficacy for good they will not be able to deny in the long run, are already laid down or preconceived in the holy writings, and they will accept willingly new truths which can be based upon old ones. Thus, it would appear to be the foremost problem of the leaders of New China to invoke the authority of Kung Fu Tse for all the reforms which they contemplate. Thanks to the aphoristic nature of his dicta, this can easily be compassed technically; scruples as to the facts will hardly arise because Confucianism, on the one hand, will be rendered more profound thanks to the new interpretation which will transfuse it with such an amount of Indian and Christian wisdom, and, on the other hand, Western practice will gain a moral foundation such as it never had heretofore, by reference to Confucian principles. They would, of course, falsify history in advancing such a new interpretation: what does it matter? What progressive age has not

acted similarly in so far as it still clung to the old ideals? What has not become of Christianity in the course of history! The religion of long-suffering has changed into one of ruthless action; the sweet, merciful Saviour has become the prototype of the modern self-determined personality! Every age has attempted to harmonise its real ideal with the traditional one, and this has always been achieved only by a falsification of history. All innovators who want to resurrect the 'real' Christ, from St. John to the prophets of New Thought, are really falsifiers of history, because they translate their own convictions, whatever their intention, into the helpless Past. This is not a reproach which I make, quite the contrary: it is impossible to take away man's historical roots; the man who was born and educated in a Christian atmosphere is essentially a Christian no matter what he believes in; he never escapes the conceptions which formed his soul. But he interprets them independently if he wishes to safeguard his personality, and brings them into harmony with the rest of his outlook on the world.

In this sense, it ought not to be impossible to reform the Chinese Empire from the spirit of Confucianism; only, as has been said already, an accelerating motive must be embodied into it. Can this be done successfully, seeing that nothing characterises the Chinese more essentially than their decidedly static outlook? European history proves that such metamorphoses take place. From the very beginning I was struck by the similarity between the early Confucian and the early Lutheran types of men; they seemed to me to be really children of the same spirit. As I pondered over this impression, it turned out to be well founded; both these world philosophies are really closely related. The Lutheran view is also essentially static, it too regards the existing classes as justified metaphysically or 'divinely ordained'; it too regards suffering as more than action, patience as more than initiative, and the attempt to strive beyond inherited position as criminal; it too is a philosophy of endurance. Thus the Lutheran faith has called to life similar advantages and similar weaknesses. Its advantages were the culture of family life, of patriarchal

existence in general; its disadvantages were its inclination towards reaction, its inability to give new forms to life, to adapt itself to new circumstances, to change natural rigidity into the power of tension by free initiative. But yet it was Luther from whom originated a tendency which suffers in no way from the weaknesses of Lutherism: Calvinistic Protestantism. That is the religion of action *par excellence*, the greatest stimulus to initiative, to progress, to self-reliant organisation of life which has ever existed. No human type in the world is comparable in efficacy with that of the reformed Protestant. To-day this type is estranged from the Lutheran; yet it is its true descendant; and in the very last instance both are still one and the same. There is still a general spirit of Protestantism of which both professions partake. By analogy with this development I do not regard it as impossible that the spirit of Confucianism will one day take on a form, thanks to which the Chinese, without having to deny their history, will come to be no less progressive than Americans and Scotsmen.

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THE similarity between Confucians and Protestants is indeed striking. The matter-of-factness and sensibleness of the Chinese, their lack of plasticity, the dryness of their souls, are to be found in an only slightly altered shape in Protestant Europe and America. In both cases their conceptions of life are based on a curious mixture of belief in authority and self-determination; both types are marked by a noticeable lack of differentiation in their souls, and an equally noticeable formative power with respect to the external world. The soul of a cultured Catholic is, no matter how paradoxical this may sound to the 'enlightened,' far richer than that of a Protestant; the education by a system such as the Catholic, which takes into account all the manifold influences of the soul and treats them all with understanding, whose forms create content and conversely produce a sense for form, cannot help developing the soul; whereas the uncomplicated and crude dogmatic substructure of Protestantism gives great moral support and a unique stimulus to action, but very little self-recognition and

almost no psychic culture. The Chinaman is inferior to the Indian precisely in the same respect as the Protestant is to the Catholic. It is extremely tiresome to discuss psychological and metaphysical problems with Chinamen. Again and again they serve one with the first principles of Confucianism, just as pastors do with the Augsburg confession; they seem to be incapable of fixing their eyes upon psychic facts as such and of realising that the metaphysical significance of manifestation is a possible problem. Their understanding of religious problems in particular is infinitesimal. The average Chinese religiosity means, like the average Lutheran one, no more than firm belief in certain revealed facts and strict observance of a definite routine of life; genuine religious experience they do not know. The Confucian Church also (so far as such a description is permissible), like the Lutheran, means essentially 'authority' and nothing more. But, on the other hand, in the same respect as the Protestants are superior to the Catholics, the Chinese are to the Indians. I know few things more coarse, less spiritually satisfying, than the religious dogmas of Calvinism; the faith of the meanest Catholic peasant is spiritually higher than that of a cultured Puritan; it has nevertheless created a type of man who excels in moral value all other Christian types. The fact is that what matters for practical life is not all-embracing insight, but singleness of character, and such a character is most readily produced by a simple doctrine. Thus, the Chinese are so marvellously cultured morally, just because they have troubled themselves so very little about the meaning of morality, and have instead allowed the Confucian principles, which express indeed eternal truths, to take complete possession of them. Such a method no doubt makes people uninteresting, but it makes them efficient.

So much for the problems of faith. As to the postulate of self-determination, this applies in China no less than it does in our case. Only it seems to me that in the Confucian world it enters into life at a higher level. Among us the profession of the ideal of autonomy easily takes the form of making men refuse to recognise anything which they do not understand, for which reason they reject the gradations of society and do not

accept the authority even of those who are demonstrably more competent than they are. This psychic attitude is as derogatory to culture as it is beneficial to the development of initiative; the man who believes in no one except himself cuts himself off from all the cultural influences which are included in the experience of others; by breaking through the barriers which nature has set to his aspirations (for it happens only very rarely that a man is destined to greater ends than those which his inherited position would admit of), he really closes the gate which leads to his perfection, for perfection is only possible within definite limits. For this reason, the most superstitious Catholic is frequently on a higher cultural level than the so-called enlightened individual. In China self-determination always only means self-determination within given limits. The Chinaman thinks for himself, judges for himself, acts as he thinks right—but only within a definite sphere. Any one who hereupon should doubt his autonomy as a postulate of Chinese consciousness should try to order a Chinese servant about in the ordinary European way; he will have little success. He will discover that the Chinese servant, with all his respectfulness, with all his assiduity and faithfulness of service, only does what seems right to himself; he does not really obey in our sense: his position is that of a man who obeys, but within this limit he is autonomous. In all details *he* wishes to decide what he has to do and what to leave undone. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis,* to all professions. In my opinion this establishes in principle the best conceivable equilibrium between autonomy and heteronomy. Absolute autonomy belongs to God alone. Man may only be self-determinate within limits if his soul is not to take harm, and these limits appear ever more restricted the more he descends from the highest stage to low ones.

One must not attempt to carry the parallel between Confucianism and Protestantism too far; perhaps I have gone too far already; Ku Hung-Ming, of whom I have seen a great deal of late, and who runs to excess in comparisons of this kind as few others do, may have infected me. In conclusion, I should like to refer therefore to a few points in

reference to which Confucianism and Protestantism appear to be quite incomparable. The former lacks the pathos which belief in an almighty personal God has given to the life of Protestants. No matter how heroic Confucians may be—their heroism has never that quality of grandeur which characterises the devout Protestant and Moslem; even in the highest instance, the case of the Confucian is rather that of a pedant's obstinacy than of the sacrificial joy of great faith. This difference is so considerable that it would change the entire picture if this pathos were not as much lacking in the Protestants of our day as it is in the Chinese. . . . The second radical difference between Confucianism and Protestantism is based upon the inartistic character of the latter. Protestantism recognises no connection between religious and artistic experience, creates no necessary relation between content and its form of expression. Thus, the genuine Protestant has as a rule very little sense for form. The Confucian possesses this sense perhaps more than any other man. Thus I felt at home immediately with the Mandarin, who lately accompanied me to the Buddhistic cloisters and brought me to the verge of despair by his lack of understanding of religious problems, as soon as I discussed the problem of style with him in his house, to the accompaniment of unending cups of tea.

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I AM now living almost entirely like a Chinese; I have most of my meals outside the Embassy quarter. The change in itself does me good; an everlastingly identical mode of life renders the physical organism philistine, robs the mind of its agility. I am convinced, if the Hindus did not eat the same dish of rice three times a day, they would not appear so stereotyped; if change in itself were less curative, then such a great variety of cures would not be efficacious; and the fact that we Europeans feel the need for variety of food like no other race on earth has undoubtedly a close connection with our inventive impulses. One cannot of course deduce the peculiarity of a nation from its specific diet, although there is no doubt a close connection between them. The man who wants to escape

sensuousness loves vegetarian food, he who wishes to refine his senses prefers animal and spiced food. And so on and so forth. What is true in general applies no less in particular. I have always found that it is advisable, when studying a nation, to share their method of life as far as possible. And in China this process is delightful.

My friends take me to those out-of-the-way gourmet restaurants which are as typical of Pekin as they are of Paris. Only the arrangements of the Chinese interiors possess more style. They are very tiny *cabinets particuliers,* generally offering a view upon the surrounding hills, and are covered with pictures and handwriting; in the room in which we feasted yesterday, there were verses of Li Tai-Pes. This inn is said to have existed since the days of the Ming Dynasty. No matter how this may be, an atmosphere of refined culture predominates in it which has changed me too into a gourmet. I listened intently to the advice of the *maître d'hôtel,* who put the dishes together for us as a poet chooses his words, and his pure culinary idealism infected me irresistibly. Why should the palate be regarded as less than the eye and the ear? A great cook is creative in the highest sense. How does he know, when he invents a new dish, and when he mixes ingredients, tasteless enough in themselves, in never previously attempted combinations, that his product will please strangers? How does he know what every dish requires? Whence his knowledge that this goes with that, considering that, as an eater, he has very little experience? If that is not genius, then nothing is. Accordingly a great cook nearly always professes decidedly the theory of *l'art pour l'art.* This was actually the case with old Frédéric in the now sadly deteriorated Tour d'Argent. He waited on no one personally who was not specially recommended to him. He looked down upon his customers, just as the painter looks down upon his public, and he received me, when I visited him for the first time, with the comment that he had, on the previous day, shown a visitor to the door who had dared to order Burgundy with a certain dish. . . . And the gourmet—is he not, too, appreciative of art in the most ideal sense? There is no doubt that humanity exaggerates the importance of vision and hearing.

One sense is as good as another; what matters is how much one achieves by it. I can imagine that, through the organs of the nose and the mouth, a perfect outlook on the world could be gained which, in its own language, conveyed the equivalent of the mysticism of Master Ekkehart. This is denied to us men because even the greatest of *chefs* has never got his sense of taste developed as his chief sense. But animals, of whom the latter is true, for whom the sense of smell also means their sense of distance, as in the case of dogs and stags, are probably capable of this in principle. Let no one misunderstand this state of affairs: if among us the gourmet as a type is below the thinker, this is not due to the fact that he lives for his palate, but to the fact that the palate conveys all too limited recognition. Even thought alone leads only exceptionally to the highest achievements; in fact, it makes most people more superficial, more material, than they would have become without it.

I have spent most enjoyable hours in these restaurants. The Chinese cuisine is exquisite, and equal in value to the French, regarded from the artistic point of view. Once we were served duck six times in succession, and its preparation was so delicately varied that it did not give the effect of repetition; while I had to admire that dish above all as a technical masterpiece which consisted chiefly of pickled jellyfish. How these unsubstantial creatures could be dressed is beyond me. . . . The Chinese, of course, use materials which we are not accustomed to, but this does not speak against them: every habit is a matter of convention, and every adherence to habit is a limitation. Thus I am ashamed that at first I shuddered at a dish of maggots which afterwards turned out to be exceedingly delicious.

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IF only I did not have to drink so much! But I never guess the riddles which are asked during meals, and it is the custom of the country that the man who fails thus must drain the cup of rice wine to the dregs time and again. And this lasts for hours. Course follows upon course, riddle upon riddle, and these gentlemen never tire in emulating each other in sagacity. People like myself acquit themselves very poorly on such occa-

sions. The solving of Chinese riddles presupposes a delicacy of mind and a capacity to guess the whole directly from the slightest references, which probably no one possesses whose power of combination has not been developed to an almost improbable degree by constant occupation with Chinese writing. For what my companions achieved playfully seems quite improbable. The solution of a riddle in reference to some casual word is often to be found in an unimportant quotation from the classics: it is solved without further ado, and generally by several people simultaneously. Men who know how to handle their subjects thus playfully can be as scholarly as you please—they possess simultaneously vital minds and souls. Yes, these gentlemen are vital, no matter what worthy members of the Hamlin Academy they may be. Their expressive eyes sparkle merrily, they seem indefatigable in their carousals, and their laughter is so infectious, so seductive, that I join in even when I do not know why.

A famous doctor related how some time ago he fell in love with a sing-song girl. Eventually, life without her became impossible; and when his worthy wife died soon afterwards, he took the girl home. He now regards his house as a paradise. While he devotes himself to his weighty studies, he is yet constantly surrounded by her chirping gaiety, and just this made his earnestness completely productive.—A tear sparkles in the old gentleman's eyes. No, the Chinese are not without feeling.

How can the myth of the Chinese lack of feeling have come to exist? I have never heard people talk more vivaciously or laugh more heartily. The uncultured European always judges the man who is master of himself as dry and cold; this often happens to Englishmen. The truth is that the self-controlled potentialise their capacities; the inner life of Englishmen is not weaker but more intense (even if it is poorer) than that of the German. In addition, only the man who is really in possession of himself can surrender himself truly. The Chinese, who never lose their equanimity, know how to relax for this very reason. And then their humour overflows and a thousand forces bubble forth all of a sudden.

The Chinese feel no less deeply and richly, only differently from ourselves. If they are wanting in Christian love for their neighbour they possess instead a feeling for solidarity which we do not know; our sympathy replaces the high culture of reverence. If the Chinese show themselves occasionally to be hard, cunning and cruel, they are, on the whole, much tamer than we Westerners, to whom they have much the same relation—the comparison comes from Ku Hung-Ming—as domesticated animals have to wild ones. We appear to them as typically heartless, coarse and cruel; from their point of view no doubt they are right. But in the same sense we are right if their inner life seems poor to us in several respects. They certainly do not know love, for instance, in our sense. I am thinking of the famous novel *P'ing-Chan-Ling-Yen*, in which calligraphic skill really plays the part of a love potion, of those 'willow studded streets' (the quarters of the ladies of pleasure) within whose confines by far the greater portion of the Chinese life of love takes place: to most of the Chinese, love means about the same as it did to the men of European antiquity. Even St. Augustine did not know the feelings which we regard as belonging essentially to love. He knew desire, enjoyment, the animalic pleasure of proximity; and probably he knew the specific mental charm, the stimulating power, which women radiate. But of love for a particular woman for her own sake, he had no idea. But then: how many among us are capable of love in this highest sense? Most of that of which we believe that it lifts us above the rest of humanity is something which we possess only in idea. . . .

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MY Chinese friends are scandalised because I do not betray any intention to marry: 'Surely you are not a wolf, no rapacious animal, that you should dare to place yourself above the universal order!' I reply to them that I would have married long ago if I had been born into the world as a Chinaman, or even as a European, if the problem with us were a comparable one. But to-day that is not so. What should be a function of the race, implies an individual problem for us, and the man who

cannot regard marriage like that, because his consciousness is not capable of being centred in the instinct for mating, simply does not marry.

In all seriousness: the new individualistic view of the marriage problem implies a misunderstanding, and is in principle beneath the Asiatic attitude. Procreation is a matter of racial concern, and should be regulated in such a way that individual preferences play no decisive part in it. The problem would be different if there were a necessary connection between the latter and what is best for the species. But such a relation exists only exceptionally. Unfortunately, it is not true that children of love are necessarily valuable children—for every bastard who possesses genius there are a thousand mediocrities. Unfortunately, it is not true that nature, as Schopenhauer asserts, avails itself of personal inclinations in order to achieve its higher purposes—for it does not know higher purposes; it cares nothing for the ennoblement of the human race. It does seem as if incompatibility of husband and wife—and even this has not been proved quite conclusively—exercises an unfavourable influence upon their progeny. On the other hand, it is absolutely certain that passionate inclination does not guarantee that the children will turn out well. The individual and the species do not coincide in this connection, their relation is rather one of polarity: the former increases at the expense of the latter, which, for its own part, flourishes at the expense of the former; this is the meaning of the well-known fact that great men rarely leave heirs, and that those races degenerate last in whom the type dominates the individual. It is from this angle of recognition that the marriage problem should be attacked and solved. This still happens in Asia. Nothing could be wiser than to present marriage as a self-evident duty which no one may evade, and in whose fulfilment the wishes of the individual are not in question, while only the good of the race should be considered; for by this means two things are attained simultaneously: firstly, the certain continuance of the race under the most favourable circumstances; and here the family always has a clearer view than the personally interested individual. The fact that marriage intermediaries

are good judges is proved beyond doubt by the incredible longevity of Eastern families and by the rarity of the phenomenon of decadence. Secondly, however, to begin with, this fundamental decision of the marriage problem against the consideration of individual feeling removes all odium. If marriage is regarded as a matter of course, as a stage upon the road of life, then it hardly plays any part in the consciousness of the individual; he does not put the question whether he is 'really' absolutely happy, and for this reason he cannot become altogether unhappy; as to the typical advantages of married life, he will partake of them no less than under other assumptions; he has a home, is free from the restlessness of the man whose race-instincts remain unsatisfied, his consciousness is enlarged in the care for his progeny. These typical advantages are always the decisive ones for the individual, even if he concludes his marriage subject to purely individualistic considerations. Where, then, are the disadvantages of the Asiatic system?—They are obvious enough. A perfect marriage in the European sense—that continuous growing together—hardly ever occurs in the Far East. But we must think here on large lines: are such marriages by any chance numerous among us? I have only seen very few, but I have noticed all the more frequently that the ideal of perfect wedlock has lowered the parties concerned. When husband and wife deceive themselves into thinking that they are made for each other when this is not so, they do not develop, they stunt one another; their consciousness idealises what should not be idealised, commonplace ideals determine the whole course of their life, and the eagle becomes a mere cock-pigeon. For this reason, married men are so frequently on a lower level than single ones, and even married women are often less than maidens, no matter how contrary to nature this seems. The Chinese, for whom the married estate is no ideal but simply a matter of course, and who generally proves himself to be an admirable father and husband, owing to his peculiar sense for the order of nature, is never lessened by being a married man. I once wrote: 'He who procreates himself renounces his personality'[1]; this applies also to the

[1] *Vide* the author's *Unsterblichkeit*, 3rd ed.

Chinese; but he renounces as little as can be renounced. As married life appears to him to be a matter of course, it does not fetter his consciousness. Though he grants more rights to the species than we do, his individual consciousness is freer from racial ties.

This, then, would appear to be the decisive factor which must be adduced against our attitude towards the marriage problem: while, on the one side, we raise matters of breeding to the level of personal problems, we drag, on the other hand, emancipated personal consciousness into that of the genus. The result is absolutely negative. The race is badly preserved in our case, degenerates or dies out, and the individual has less freedom than in the East. It is surely a serious misconception to see, in the extraordinarily individualised modern eroticism, for instance, a proof of heightened self-consciousness: it would seem here, rather, as if racial instincts had been raised unnaturally into the sphere of self-consciousness, which accordingly loses its own nature. Individualisation in this sense is no sign of emancipation. The other day a French novel fell into my hands: I can hardly say how shallow the typically Western view of love seems against the background of the East. The love for a particular sensuous being is to be the meaning of life. . . . This is a terrible misconception, even in the case of the purest love, and proves superficiality, even in the case of the profoundest inclination. The Upanishad teaches: 'The husband is not dear for the husband's sake but for the self's own sake.' And this doctrine, and not Western romanticism, is right. Of course, a particular individual man can be the exponent of the highest to another—hereupon rests the possible divinity of marital love—but it remains in itself a pure question of the species, and to make it into a personal one can only be done at the expense of personality. Moreover, experience teaches the man better than to treat generalities individually. Most men with distinguished minds complain that women do not do them justice in that capacity, but merely as 'famous' people or as productive, powerful beings, and highly talented girls complain similarly that men only value their typical qualities. The fact is that in sexual love the

species manifests itself; a personal view of this impulse implies a metaphysical misconception. This does not occur often in the East. For this reason, love has rarely produced such fair blossoms there as among us; they flourish only where their significance is overestimated, and personally I would be sorry to miss them. But I am too honest to justify my preferences objectively: I know, rather, that the view of the wise men of the East, which accords to the species what is due to it, while basing the self-consciousness in other spheres, is the higher and more beneficial attitude.

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. . . I HAVE read over what I have written, a day later. It is correct, of course, rather more in idea than in practice, for there is no doubt that our family life is above that of the Chinese, because of our profounder understanding of human rights in general, and particularly of the dignity of women. But it applies in idea. Our next duty would be to re-establish on our higher level of individualisation the fundamental relation between the genus and the individual which exists in the East. The continuance of the species must not be permanently exposed to the caprice of inclination, for this would inevitably lead to the extinction of the race. The days, of course, are past in which man and woman could, like animals, be brought together by the decision of an outside party, but they must now learn to do from free choice what used to be done for them. They must now learn to conduct the procreation of the species as such from personal assumptions; they must unlearn drawing consequences from individual inclinations, in which they may otherwise indulge at pleasure, but which could harm what is super-individual. It is possible to imagine a general state of affairs in which men and women are so far developed that they could differentiate at will between their personal ego and that of their species, and in which, for this very reason, they would be able to establish perfect harmony between the two.

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TO-DAY at last the spirit of Chinese classicism has taken hold of me. There is no method of approach from the outside to the spirit of a living culture, it is a monad without windows; the man who has not been possessed by it will never acquire it. And this spirit seems proportionately more exclusive as the word has become flesh. It is just possible to understand Protestantism without being converted to it; Catholicism is only understood by him who has at any rate felt in a Catholic way in certain moods; in the same sense, French civilisation is more exclusive than German culture. As to Chinese culture: if any apparently abstract entity can lay claim to concrete reality, then it is the 'spirit' of this culture. It is independent to such a degree that the individuals who are animated by it almost cease to be individuals: they give the effect of mere representatives.—What I had often experienced as a fact outside of myself became my personal experience this morning, when I tarried, in the company of a scholar, learned in the classics, in the temple of Kung Fu Tse.

In the courtyards of this temple, which are decorated by the mortuary tablets of all the sages of the country, the great state examinations have taken place ever since the Yuan Dynasty, and the name of every one who passed them with honours is handed down to posterity upon a stone tablet. Next door, in a peaceful hall, the works of the nine classics are engraved upon the enduring marble. Every year in this very place the emperor used to read his own poems aloud. There is an atmosphere of culture in this place, of an intensity such as, to the best of my belief, I have never known. It penetrated into my being irresistibly. And as I entered into the soul of my literary companion, who explained the monuments and descriptions to me with a voice trembling with reverence, and who read to me now and again, with eyes shining with enthusiasm, famous messages from the classics, I conjured up the spirit for which I had been searching.

What a unique spirit! It is, no matter how unexpected it may sound, the incarnate spirit of classical philology, and yet it is no pale ghost, but quite a substantial creature, perhaps the most solid that I have met with for a long time in this

sphere; its density seems to me to be considerably greater than that of the scholar who serves as my intermediary. Here, then, the spirit of a definite literary tradition has actually become the soul of a vital section of men. I can turn whichever way I like, I can strike whatever chords of my being I choose; this spirit will not release me. I experience everything as the expression, explanation, completion or illustration of classical wisdom, and in the very form which makes its peculiar style. And, strange to say, I should feel oppressed, but I cannot say that I do; it seems to me as if my possibilities of experience were not in any way restricted; they only seem to have taken on a different colour. But no: of course I am confined within narrower bounds, only I am no longer able to perceive it; I have exchanged my normal consciousness against another one; and I ought to know, as a philosopher, that the rose, from her point of view, is not in a position to realise in what way she is inferior to the violet. All that I can recognise immediately, and what should stand the test of objective criticism, is that I am infinitely more unequivocal than usual; I react to all impressions according to a unified plan, all my ideas spring from an identical source, and, above all, I find no hesitation whatsoever in the process of expressing myself: where as a rule I search laboriously for corresponding forms, I now slip into traditional forms instinctively, and I feel nevertheless that I am expressing myself intrinsically, originally and personally.

This is a very significant experience: as far as its general quality is concerned, it is not new to me: the spirit of Catholicism possesses one in just this way. It too does not give to one's consciousness new content but rather creates a new form of consciousness; it too is so all-penetrating that it takes hold of every impulse of the soul; it too has the power of leading over all personal experiences into objective forms, so that even the freest spirit does not feel necessarily tied by its dogmas, while the most spontaneous and vital individual not infrequently finds a means of personal expression in the observance of traditional ritual; this spirit too really creates a special variety of men. But this is more intelligible in the case of Catholicism, for its spirit represents an organism so highly

developed and so universally and delicately differentiated, that it includes within it the possibilities of the richest individuality. The spirit of Chinese classicism, however, must be described as poor; its fundamental ideas are few in number, and its ramifications are scanty. How is it that nevertheless I do not experience a feeling of poverty, and that the Chinese scholar, potentially at any rate, is a complete being? For the Puritan, the child of an equally poor spirit, is not complete, nor is the Buddhist, not to mention the European classical philologist, who also belongs to the same genus as the Chinese scholar. The cause is, what I have recognised again and again as the main characteristic of Eastern wisdom: the concentration, to which it owes its origin, and the concentration with which it is studied. The teaching of the wise men of China is sparse and monosyllabic, not because it excludes, but because it condenses; its dicta, understood in the way in which the cultivated Chinese understand them, contain within themselves the quintessence of all that could possibly be meant. And this is true of its expression as well as of its meaning. The more profoundly a connection of facts is understood, the nearer one approaches the point of intersection of the co-ordinates which serve to determine it, and the less concepts are in question. In the case of our arithmetical means of expression (in which we must necessarily represent also Chinese wisdom) this does not appear always quite clearly; in the case of the algebraic method of the Chinaman, however, it is so obvious that the classical expression appears as the only possible one from the point of view of every one who has seized its meaning. And this is the aim and result of the specifically Chinese training. It sounds grotesque to us that a man should devote ten or twenty years to the study of Confucius alone: he does not study in the way we do; he meditates every individual sentence until its meaning has permeated his inner being, and when he has reached his goal, it does not mean that he has understood Confucius in our sense, but that the spirit of the great teacher has taken complete possession of him, just as a great passion takes possession of men. In this process philology acquires a new meaning. If it can be presupposed that the spirit

of a culture has been acquired, then really nothing else matters than to turn all one's attention to its expression, and when this expression can be found to perfection in classical literature, then philological study is really the gateway to humanity. Our philologists credit European classical studies with similar importance; they too assert that men of classical education who are masters of Latin and Greek, and know their Cicero, are a match for all the problems of life. But this is no longer true in Europe. The spirit of Greece and Rome is not our spirit at all, but its ancestor. And, no matter how perfect that spirit was, it does not help others to perfection, as does the Chinese spirit, because its roots do not go so deep. This spirit embodies significance as it were in itself, beyond the realm of appearances; the other does so in the form of a particular phenomenon which differs in quality from that other which is our existence. For this reason the classical philologist cannot be a complete being in modern Europe, and classical education is not essential to perfect development of personality, and is of little use in acquiring the mastery of life, no matter how valuable its possession may be otherwise. In China it makes men perfect and fits them, moreover, for practical life. It was with very good reason that, until the great revolution, all official posts were occupied by doctors of philology, and the passing of the literary state-examinations was regarded as an absolute proof of competence. The Chinaman who had inwardly assimilated the spirit of his classics was a match for all the manifestations of early Chinese life, in the same way as Americans are a match for their own if they are possessed completely by the spirit of initiative, no matter how mediocre the rest of their knowledge may be.

But, on the other hand, this spirit is a mature organism. It can procreate itself and act—but it cannot become rejuvenated; it will not tend to the salvation of the China which no longer contains the world within it. It is, moreover, in spite of all its advantages, too much a spirit of philistinism. If the philologist, the scholar, the literary man, can be revered by a nation as its ideal type, then the peculiarities of this variety of men must also apply to its essential being. And it is so. I am entering

freely into the spirit which possesses me: yes, it is unbending, pedantic, rigid, precocious and whimsical. My consciousness is that of a schoolmaster, or, to be more precise, that of a pushing model pupil, overproud of what he has acquired. To-day I could do nothing foolish, it would be impossible for me to fall in love, unless it were with a girl who was a model pupil; I would never dare to pursue a thought whose direction had not been pointed out by authority. Significance apart from the letter does not interest me. And the worst is that I am very well pleased with myself in this garb, that I feel no desire beyond the confines of my philistinism. Yes, the profundity which found exhaustive expression once has by that very fact become superficial. For a short period the surface appears to be profound, but an intimate change soon takes place by which it becomes superficial once more; the spirit which was originally embodied in the letter becomes eventually resolved in it again. Thus, the importance of every cultural value is ultimately a question of time. The Chinaman concerned with the Eternal has, therefore, more inducement than all other men in the same position to deny manifestations altogether.

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I SPEND many hours each day with Ku Hung-Ming and his friends and supporters. He is a man of such wit and such a fiery temperament that I am sometimes reminded of a Latin. To-day he was explaining at great length how wrong the Europeans, and especially the sinologists are, in considering the development of Chinese culture quite by itself, without comparison with that of the West: for both have evolved, according to him, within the frame of an identical formula. In both there has been an equivalent of antiquity and mediævalism, renaissance and enlightenment, reformation and counter-reformation, Hebraism and Hellenism (to use the terms of Matthew Arnold), rationalism and mysticism; and the parallel is to be drawn even in detail: even in China, for instance, there has been a Bayard. I do not know Chinese history sufficiently to test the soundness of these comparisons, and I rather suspect

Ku Hung-Ming, as I do the majority of his countrymen, of practising rather too cheap a form of intellectualism, such as flourishes, for instance, in Southern Italy. This much, however, is true: all historical conditions are special manifestations, brought about by particular circumstances, of the natural forms of human life, which are the same everywhere; and since all possible combinations of circumstances vacillate round a few types whose sequence appears to be subject to one rule, it cannot but be that all peoples of comparable temperament also pass through comparable stages. Now Western Europeans and Chinamen are singularly comparable; they belong essentially to an identical fundamental type, the type of the 'men of expression,' to which the Indians and the Russians, for instance, do not belong. It must be possible therefore to establish historical parallels. Nevertheless, my attitude towards the value of such comparisons is sceptical. Time may possess one single significance in itself—it certainly is not so in reference to men. The Chinese are men of long, and we of short, breath; for us mobility, for them quiescence, is the normal condition. How, then, can one make valid comparisons? We boast of our rapid progress: thanks to it, we will probably always remain barbarians, since perfection is possible only within given limits and we are perpetually changing ours. Nor do I accept it as agreed that we will continue to advance for long at the same rate: every direction in life is limited inwardly; we too will one day reach the end, and probably earlier than we think. I have often heard the following argument, especially in India: since all cultures we are aware of start at a relatively high level—and this is correct—this presupposes that there has been before an exceedingly long period of slow ascent. Most certainly not! Every idea contains within itself, not only in theory but *de facto*, the whole of its consequences; it strives for actuality; it becomes embodied wherever matter permits it to do so, so that, as soon as the mental processes are set in motion at all, they take place with great rapidity. For this reason, as long as consciousness is asleep, æons may pass before anything new happens; this may occur either in the primordial state or, as in China, at a cer-

tain level of culture which has once been reached. But once it has been wakened, development takes place with extreme rapidity. How long was the span of time from the awakening of the Greek spirit to its perfection? A century. How long did it take from the discovery of the principle of aviation until it was applied perfectly in practice? Not ten years. In the same sense it may very well be that we too shall shortly come to an end, and stop progressing at a level of development which will be not nearly so far ahead of that of China as we suppose. For in the modern sense of the word we too have been progressive people only for the last hundred years.

Ku Hung-Ming does not miss a single opportunity of having a dig at Laotse. His fundamental thesis is that Confucius is the infinitely greater of the two because he understood significance as profoundly as Laotse, but did not retire from the world, but expressed his profundity in his mastery of it. If Confucius really had been, and had achieved, what Ku asserts of him, then, of course, he would be incomparably greater. However, this is not so. It would appear to be contradictory to nature that the same man should live altogether in profundity and prove himself, at the same time, to be a mighty organiser of the surface; each one of these problems requires a special physiological organisation, and I know of no accredited case in which a man possessed both to a similar degree. Kung Fu Tse and Laotse represent the opposite poles of possible perfection; the one represents the perfection of appearance, the other perfection of significance; the former, perfection within the sphere of the materialised, the latter, within the non-materialised; therefore they cannot be measured with the same gauge. But Confucius must no doubt appear greater to the Chinese because they are practical to the extreme as a nation, and to this extent they have no direct relation to profundity as such. The more I see of the Chinese, the more I notice how uninteresting their thoughts are. Their thinking is not their essential quality: their existence is the expression of their depth. Thus, Ku Hung-Ming is far more important as a man than as a writer and as a thinker.

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IT is true, after all: the average Taoist is far below the average Confucian. The Chinaman, as he appears to-day, is really essentially (I would almost like to say physiologically) a Confucian; if he denies the spirit whose child he is, he is unfaithful to himself. This appears already in the flaws of the popular Taoist theory, even where it is free from all magic and fetish additions. To-day a priest of high standing explained to me that while the concept of Tao applied no doubt to a principle in itself, the significance of the world lay all the same in its pre-established harmony; so that meditative absorption does not really lead to a union with the creative mainspring of life, but to unison with the objective order of the world. Even this Taoist priest was, without knowing it, a Confucian. Once one has become identified with one's deepest Self, then one knows of no given order any longer; from the Atman point of view even a supposedly conclusive existence appears as creative development, and creation lies beyond all norms; all this is a matter of course for every Brahmin. For the Taoist, however, the Confucian 'harmony' remains his fundamental idea, in spite of the profundity of Taoist doctrines. He only knows how to comprehend what is objective; he can experience nothing purely subjectively.

The specific form of Taoism does not, on the whole, seem to me to be suited to produce a higher type of men; it is too wide, too manifold, too ambiguous for this purpose; and to this extent it does not signify much that the Taoist monk is below the Buddhist as well as the Christian one. But the fact that all the Chinese with whom I have had intercourse, including the Taoists, have no understanding whatever of the marvellous teaching of Laotse, makes one conclude that they are typically weak in subjective matters; they lack metaphysical consciousness. This does not surprise me. Something similar is true of all people to a higher or lesser degree whose typical aspiration is directed towards completion; of the Greeks, for instance, and the French. The man whose primary instinct is the tendency for expression will make his being objective like no one else. He will be, according to his talents, the greatest artist, the noblest man, the most perfect political being,

but he will not understand himself profoundly; as soon as he begins to think, he gets beyond himself and only perceives what is external. Thus it is that the thinkers of peoples who produce the greatest artists are usually rationalists. In the case of the Greeks this relation did not appear unequivocally, on account of their Dionysian impulses, which, especially in the case of their philosophers, frequently held the balance against their Apollonian tendencies: in the case of the Chinese it appears in an extreme degree, because the Chinese are 'men of expression' in the extreme. There is probably no more inward or more profound art than that of China, but the processes of thought are nowhere more arid in their effect. How unbearably boring and dry are the discourses of Mencius! Quite unconsciously they evoke the picture of the most pedantic of all schoolmasters. In reality, however, Mencius was undoubtedly a very cultured gentleman, of perfect moral culture, with the most delicately shaded sense of form, in whom everything external appeared to be animated from within. Only the processes of thought were no corresponding means of expression for him; he was unable to give a voice to his ego by thinking.

Philosophising is, as it were, unnatural to the Chinese, although they lead the most philosophical of all lives; their wisdom expresses itself in what they represent by their lives, not by their thoughts about it. Nevertheless, they have produced some of the profoundest thinkers of whom we know. What sort of men can they have been? I dare say there was much in them of the fool and the charlatan; they must have been typical, even extreme, examples of the co-existence of great wisdom and great insufficiency. When the wise man in the Tao-Teh-King exclaims: 'I am undecided, without a sign for my actions, like a little child which cannot laugh as yet; I have the heart of a fool. I am unquiet like the sea, I am lazy like a good-for-nothing'—I do not think that this is to be understood only ironically; the wise man will, with that curious lack of vanity which characterises the Chinese so frequently, have given a faithful picture of himself. At any rate, it gives us food for thought that the Chinese people, whose

feeling for human greatness is unrivalled in its acuteness, is honouring the Taoist sages more as magicians than as 'noble' and 'perfected' men.

Nevertheless, there may have been Taoist saints who might be regarded as the greatest of all. There is a superiority in Taoism which exists neither in Buddhism nor Christianity nor even in Brahminism; for Taoism is the only Yoga system which has not established an equation between perfection and bliss. What an evil influence it has been in Indian and Christian Yogis that they demand the coincidence of the highest condition with happiness! This expectation has frustrated their aspirations to become really free from themselves. Happiness can only be defined as a function of egoism; it is no possible condition for the man who has overcome his ego. The Taoists alone have recognised this fact. If a Taoist has ever existed who has known how to translate this recognition into life, he will probably have surpassed all the saints.

✦

HOW nature mocks all formulas! I had imagined that I had exhausted in my mind the possibilities of the Chinese *literati*, and now I meet a man whose mere existence gives the lie to my generalisation: a true scholar with a glowing soul of the most sublimated spirituality! In China, as everywhere else, many enthusiastic spirits are concerned to-day in calling a new world religion into life, and here, as everywhere else, these prophets are generally uninteresting. They are professorial natures who have been intoxicated by the (supposed) recognition of the one spirit which is at the basis of all higher religions, and who thereupon step forth and endeavour to better the world instead of writing harmless textbooks on comparative religion. The man with whom I spent this afternoon is animated by the most genuine religiosity; he reminds me in many ways of Calvin, only the latter's characteristics appear softened by many a Franciscan trait, a thing which seems possible only in China. He sees the fundamental weakness of China in precisely that which strikes every thoughtful visitor from the very first: that the spirit has died in the letter; and the one object of

his existence is to impart a new spirit to the letter. The spirit which he means is closely related to the Christian spirit of St. John the Apostle. But of course he considers Confucianism as the best possible form in which to realise its meaning. The fact is that he is a Chinaman and a cultured one into the bargain, and he would not be one if he thought differently. The looseness of Taoism, the excessive softness of Buddhism, are not congenial to him. As to Christianity, its indubitable truths are, according to him, expressed in a language which is alien to the Chinese. If he should translate them into his own, they would result in nothing else than Confucianism, perhaps not in its traditional form, but in the Confucianism which he means; and for this reason the introduction of Christianity can consequently be disregarded.

While I was listening to him and watching the play of expression in his marvellously spiritualised face, whose language I could understand directly, I felt full of shame when I thought of the missionaries who dared to 'convert' such 'heathens.' If only they would learn before they taught! Of course, my interrogator was not quite in the right; the deepest truth of Christianity cannot be resolved in Confucianism. But this last word will never be understood by the Chinese, just as little as the Europeans will ever penetrate into the innermost heart of the religion of the Indians; biological and historical barriers exist there. However, these barriers do not limit religious experience, they only limit the mental field of vision. Thus, an orthodox Confucian can be as near to God and give an equally true expression to the divinity within him, as the most enlightened of Indians; he can do so precisely in so far as he remains within the frame of his nature.

How beautiful a good Chinese head is! It represents an extreme of expressive value—and by how much simpler means than in our case! A European must look 'remarkable' (for instance, he must have rugged features, wild hair, a powerfully marked cranium) if his head is to possess pictorial qualities; the Chinese are beyond looking remarkable. In their case the highest mobility has been condensed in simple curves, in calm, relaxed features. A good Chinese head, no matter how strange

it may sound, seems more classic than an equally good European one.

✦

ON the whole, there is no lack of men and communities, no matter what may be said concerning the lack of religiosity among the Chinese, who have placed their powers at the service of a religious revival of China. Nevertheless, I can understand perfectly now that the missionaries regard the Chinese as irreligious: for none of them is religious in the Church sense of the word, not even their most zealous reformers; none of them seems to be anxious to gain a victory for a new profession of faith. Probably such militant procedure is opposed to the temperament of the Chinese: no matter how intransigently conservative the Confucian may be in his attitude—in practice he fought against and finally overcame Buddhism by absorbing the foreign doctrine, so that he now asserts that it is an expression of his own Confucian outlook. From time to time fanatics have appeared, and they have been allowed to go their way, like everything else in this empire, until they came to a standstill of their own accord; but the average cultured Chinaman is no less tolerant than the Indian. I must constantly think of a conversation which I had with an exceptionally zealous and rough-mannered old Confucian priest: of course, said he, Confucianism was the absolutely perfect expression of truth; but the truth in itself, according to its inner meaning, we Christians possess also; that was a foregone conclusion. Compare such an attitude with that of a Lutheran pastor who is in debate with a Catholic!

The new religious movements in China seem to me to be marked essentially by their lack of confessionalism and lack of ecclesiasticism. This is the natural consequence of that typically Chinese attitude to which I referred already in Canton, namely, that the Church is regarded as an 'institution,' as a practical, external organisation which has no inner connection with religiosity as such. How Protestant this trait is! The Church was always an institution to the Protestant, instituted by God so as to keep the world in order; thus it could

not but be that every new formation, in the name of inwardness, contained within it a tendency to separate from the Church, which was never the case in Catholicism, for which cults have an inner significance. What is happening more and more in the lap of Christian Protestantism, but which is openly admitted only rarely, is the natural tendency of Chinese Protestantism. Here we see how matter-of-fact considerations can, in certain circumstances, lead to the same goal as creative intuition. Undoubtedly religious feeling is weakly developed among the Chinese people; nevertheless, the latter has understood, perhaps more clearly than any other, that which is not essential for religion. In principle the Church has really nothing whatever to do with religion; the interrelation of these two things is a secondary matter in the conceptual sense; divine worship is magic in all circumstances. And while magic is a very important natural science and a noble craft besides, it has no religious significance. Being religious means striving after the highest self-realisation; endeavouring to transfuse all appearance with the divine life. Such aspirations can be assisted by magic, which in itself, however, remains a mere technicality. Where, as in the case of the Chinese and the Northern Europeans, the temperament is a sober one, and where, moreover, the feeling for independence is developed so highly that men do not want to accept more assistance than they can possibly avoid, there development inevitably leads ever further away from magic; and thus away from the Church, from cults and from professions.

✦

WHY does the Confucian reach such a high degree of perfection so frequently? This question imposes itself more and more upon me, the more cultured Chinese I meet. I cannot say that I have got to know a truly great man, a 'noble' one in the sense of Confucius; I cannot assert of any of my acquaintances that they impress me by their nature. But an extraordinary number among these gentlemen stand on a human level such as I have only met with exceptionally in other latitudes. This must be due to Confucianism. I will devote to

the penetration of this problem the dusky twilight hours of a day on which the plundering soldiers do not make it seem desirable to drive about.

The ideal Chinese is defined by the cultural ideal of his nation: the ideal of concretion; the inner meaning is to manifest itself exhaustively in appearance, for every one partakes of Tao and signifies, as a special phenomenon, a link in universal harmony: he can therefore realise himself only if he acts in unison with the order of the world, and that means as long as he regulates his life strictly according to objective rules and laws. If I may further presuppose that the obedience to the recognised rules actually makes possible the highest degree of self-realisation, then it is inevitable that, in adhering to them, I become perfected, *no matter what I may be as an individual.* Thus my problem would be solved: the Confucian is so frequently on an unusually high level of culture because his highest ideal is an ideal of the norm, so that every normal being appears in principle fit to realise it; and because, moreover, the given setting of the ideal points for the Chinese the road directly to self-realisation.

All races and religions have postulated ideals which are to be exemplary to every one. Every one of us is to be like Christ, every Indian like Krishna or like Buddha. But every one cannot become a saint, no matter how fervently he may strive, because this requires special talents which he does not possess, and for this reason Christians especially regard it as impossible that they will ever be able to attain to their highest example. Thus the example remains ineffective as a rule. If it is effective, the result is not beneficial for most men: it is not good for any one to want to be what is not in accordance with his nature. The Catholic priest is undoubtedly superior to the Protestant in idea; the clergyman ought to have reached the point at which he can live a celibate life without temptation, his sexual instincts ought to have been transmuted completely, he ought to have escaped from all natural ties, and he should be able to live only for others. But in the majority of cases he cannot do so, all the more rarely as religious temperament goes hand in hand, without exception, with sensuousness, and for this reason

it was a good thing that a different, cheaper type of priest received official sanction with the advent of the Reformation. The concrete value of ideals depends solely upon its relation to given possibilities; only such as have a favourable relation to nature, which are attainable in principle, can be advantageous. The latter applies to a marvellous degree in the case of the Chinese. Their ideal does not presuppose an extraordinary, but an average, temperament which every one can assume of himself, and it is realised in the perfect development of an average nature. Thus *a priori* it does not frighten any one. It is not unattainable for any nature, it rather helps every one who strives after it seriously, to realise what he is. It is very curious how Confucius simply rejects everything abnormal. He says: 'To recognise the unrecognisable, to attain the unattainable; to perform deeds which would draw admiration from the coming centuries: these are things which I would never attempt.' And, elsewhere: 'The way of Tao is not outside or apart from the normal life of man.' He cautions expressly against overestimation of the ideal. In the Chong Yong he says: 'Now I know why truly moral life is so rare; wise men regard the moral ideal as higher than it really is, and the fools do not know how to do it justice; noble men aspire too highly, they want to live high above their normal selves, and the ignoble do not strive enough.' Confucius seems to be anxiously concerned that the ideal might be overestimated. The ideal man is not considered the man who strives to conquer heaven, but the one who does what lies nearest to hand, the modest individual who wishes to represent only what he is destined for. Not the genius is considered to be the highest man, but he whose indifferently gifted but supremely cultured personality gives perfect expression to the norm, for all individual existence is the mirror of universal harmony. But Confucius lays all the greater stress upon expression. A wise man who stood on a high inward level was not yet to be regarded as perfect: he had to express himself with dignity; the wise man who expressed himself with dignity was not yet to be regarded as perfect either: dignity had to be sublimated into charm. Profundity could only be regarded as profundity

when it transfused the surface altogether. How is any one, for whom the teaching of Kung Fu Tse is the word of God, whose education has been conducted in such a way that this teaching has become his very principle of life, not to advance upon the road to perfection? How is he, since this teaching actually includes the essence of all practical wisdom of life, not to approach perfection frequently? Every average individual must get further as a Confucian than as a Brahmin or as a Christian; only those who are not normal do not benefit. The subnormal individual remains farther below the norm than he would do subject to Christian presuppositions, because these give him more hope; the development of those who are above the average is impeded; and the abnormal individual meets with no understanding. Therefore, among the Chinese original individualities are rarer than anywhere else, the uncultured man is more blunt and failures are sacrificed. But the average reach a higher degree of perfection more frequently than anywhere else in the world.

Is the Confucian alternative, in a world which is not round, not the best possible, if one may assume that there can be an ideal of universal applicability? Perfection is the supreme goal which mortal men may aspire to, therefore all emphasis must be laid upon it. This, moreover, is the most humane course one can possibly take. For perfection is attainable in principle for every one; it is also the wisest in so far as, subject to assumptions which facilitate such a development, men can become great who would not become so otherwise; one should remember the greatness and profundity which distinguish sometimes insignificant women, that naïve, innocent greatness before which even the wisest man bows so readily. And this brings me to the last consideration which speaks decisively for Confucianism: it creates men with great potentialities. The development of the feminine soul has almost always taken place, thanks to the external inhibitions of family life: in the same way the Confucians owe the high level of their humanity to their incredibly rigid system. The gentlemen whom I mean would never have attained anything like so deep a culture if they had been born and educated in Western latitudes; they

owe this to their static conception of the world as a static system. According to Chinese ideas, the universe stands still; it is perfect in itself, not to be perfected; thus ultimately nothing can be achieved by will. Life, however, presses upwards irresistibly, and remains a progressive and dynamic principle even where it is interpreted statically; thus, progress takes place in spite of everything. Only it takes place not externally but internally. Psychic energy becomes accumulated which finds no expression in initiative, and for this reason the average cultured Chinaman is characterised by a state of inner tension such as we find only now and again in an exceptional being in the West.

The Chinese owe their superiority without doubt to the Confucian 'ideal normality.' It is impossible to conceive a more salutary general ideal. Even the West is beginning lately to recognise this: public opinion is giving the preference more and more to normality as opposed to abnormality, the ascetic and heroic ideals are being replaced by the ideal of appropriateness to Nature, and perfection is valued higher than natural condition. The canonisation which Goethe is experiencing progressively in German-speaking countries is largely due to this very fact: of all our great men, he was a normal man more than any one else, he excluded fewer existences than all the others. Will Confucianism one day come to us? It is not impossible. It is *the* philosophy of normality, and, understood profoundly and essentially, according to its spirit and not according to the letter, it is undoubtedly the best philosophy for the masses. There is one point, however, on which we must not give way to any illusion: the philosophy of normality does not draw us upward, does not favour a high idealism, does not enhance our powers. Everything that goes to make up the highest pride of the West is due to the fact that it has desired the impossible; the Confucian always only wants the possible. Here one must choose one of two alternatives: either we desire the superman—then we can have no consideration for the masses; that was the situation until recently in the West; all supreme ideals, those of Christianity included, were destined for a select minority. Or else we want to lead the masses as

they are to perfection—then one renounces the higher types. It is hardly to be doubted that, sooner or later, our democratic world will seize the latter alternative, whose ideal is the perfect normal man, if it constructs a model for itself at all. And it will construct one. Humanity is less aware to-day than ever before that ideals are not meant to be examples, which every one has to imitate, but embodiments of the basic tones of life to which every one is to attune his personal note; it seems less mature to-day than ever to deny the postulate of uniformity and to approach that highest condition in which every tone resounds only as itself in a harmonic relation to the basic tones, which, for their part, should resound powerfully and purely; modern life is further than ever from the ideal of the symphony. . . . Nevertheless, even if the ideal of normality should be proclaimed as the absolute ideal, it would be a mistake to introduce Confucianism as it is into Europe. In order to see normality idealised in Confucius, one must be a Chinese. Only men who have not been individualised to a high degree can recognise so many regulations as being universally applicable, only minds of weak imagination can become enthusiastic at such a matter-of-fact example, only beings of great talent for expression, but small talent for conception, can find satisfaction in so poor a system. However strange it may sound: the more human beings an ideal, regarded in the abstract, is destined to lead to perfection, the less do its concrete expressions appear to be generally exemplary. Christ and Buddha embodied true ideals of humanity, however little the majority may emulate them directly; Confucius can only be an example to the Chinese; he does not rouse our enthusiasm. This does not speak against him, but only proves once more the exclusiveness of everything concrete. Englishmen will hardly understand our Goethe cult; it is strange to them that a pronounced pedant, a circumstantial, clumsy provincial, can represent a human maximum to a people; and Goethe really was, among other things, what they reproach him with. But in this same sense it seems monstrous to us that England could have made an ideal of Dr. Johnson, that thick-headed average Briton, without the least originality, who was more biased than any

Anglo-Saxon after him, the founder of that cult of prejudice which ever since has characterised the English middle classes as nothing else does, the *roi des cuistres*, as Sainte-Beuve so admirably called him, the man who, of all those whose memory has been preserved by mankind, has pronounced the largest number of commonplaces with the greatest and profoundest conviction. But this is the fate of every ideal of normality which has been materialised.

✦

I AM spending the last days I have in Pekin in excursions to the surroundings. On what a grand scale nature is here! How powerfully it enlarges one's self-consciousness! The rhythmic uniformity of the landscape gives it the appearance of unlimited extension; the clear, dry air makes all distance seem illusory: I feel as if my vision reached to the boundaries of the world. If I had been born as the heir to the dragon throne in Pekin it would probably seem a matter of course to me to be lord of the earth; especially as no proof would be required. It would appear from the history of antiquity that the mere existence of the emperor is sufficient to keep the world in order. From the cradle on, the example of Shun would have been held up to me. This holy man only sat there, turned his face towards the south, and complete harmony predominated. The seasons maintained their allotted spans, all sons served their fathers, all couples loved each other, all officials were trustworthy. I would be assured again and again: if only I brought my personality to perfection, then the cosmos would arrange itself of its own accord. And if I really perceived clearly what that meant, what immense importance was innate in me, and then looked out into the expanse of nature, then I would undoubtedly think: I am great!

But I would think so without ὕβρις, in all modesty; I would perhaps think so in all humility. I would have the same feeling which takes hold of the mountaineer when at last he looks about him from the summit of his aspirations: the feeling of being great, yes, but in the midst of something so infinitely more great that he delights, as a matter of fact, much more in

the consciousness of his being small. I, the emperor, am only a wheel in the mechanism of the infinite world; perhaps the greatest, the fly-wheel, but only one member in the organisation. And thereupon I would think in humility of the unlimitedness of my power. Why am I called unlimited when I am responsible for the whole of creation, where an insignificant carelessness on my part would result in unspeakable damage? They call me unlimited because no one stands above me. Somewhere or other the last authority must be reached. All moral efficacy is based upon authority; where this authority is not unconditional it is lacking altogether. The barbarians, the Christians, so I am told, transfer all unqualified authority to a god whom no one has ever seen. That must have been the invention of a cunning but unjust emperor who wanted to make things easy for himself; or whose moral sense was not sufficiently developed. I would be ashamed not to bear extreme responsibility.

I escape from the soul of the Son of Heaven, and enter into one of the many who, in the shape of curious enquirers, come from the Far West to visit the imperial town of the Far East. What an amazing discovery! I have entered from something very great into something very small, and I find that the self-estimation of the latter is many times greater. He recognises nothing above himself; regards himself as the highest conceivable man, destined to rule the world. Moreover, he is irresponsible; he stands outside the solidarity of nature. Which autocrat is more worthy of reverence, the emperor, who bears consciously the responsibility for the processes of the world, or the free American, who boasts that he could smash it?

43

HANKOW

On the way here from Pekin the train was held up suddenly by soldiers. They were an independent division which belonged neither to the republic nor to the Manchus, and they were apparently bored and eagerly seized upon the few

opportunities for diversion which came their way. At first the situation did not look uncritical, no matter how uncritically the train conductors seemed to regard it: the soldiers attacked the carriages with fixed bayonets, and looked as if they were going to search the baggage. However, they did nothing; in the midst of the turmoil they seemed to wait for something; and when the 'peacemakers' came and began to talk to them with a gentle mien, they seemed to have found what they wanted. It took hours before the negotiations were concluded; but they let us pass on unharmed.

What quaint soldiery! During my stay in Canton a battle raged between the troops of the Government and the pirates; but occasionally an interval occurred, and the enemies had the most peaceable and friendly intercourse as if they were not at war at all. The story goes in Hankow that residents who were playing football were molested the other day by the bullets which flew across from the neighbouring field of battle; they thereupon sent a message to the nearest general with the request to cease shooting until they had finished their match, and he is said to have acceded to their wish. The Chinese seem to be warriors as other people are cobblers or haberdashers, that is to say, they do not connect any kind of idealism with the profession of arms; and while they practise it, their heart seems hardly to be in it. What wonder, in a realm whose people have, from immemorial times, professed peace *à tout prix* as the highest ideal! In Chinese literature the general is rarely represented as a hero; he is often represented as a ruffian, and generally simply as a coarse churl. It has never been regarded as a disgrace in China if a campaign was lost; pre-eminence was always given to the weapons of the mind over physical ones. A quaint legend relates how envoys of a king of barbarians once came to the emperor and threatened him with war and conquest. He did not know at first what he should reply, because he was convinced of the worthlessness of his own army, and not sufficiently informed concerning that of the enemy. He thereupon thought of the poet, who happened to be at his court: he no doubt would know how to frame such an answer that the envoys would depart in terror. The

poet was, as usual, full of wine; and it was only the empress who, with the assistance of the most beautiful of her women, succeeded with difficulty at last in waking him up from his inebriation. But when he finally realised what the trouble was, he improvised such a fine speech on the spur of the moment, a speech animated by the spirit of such a superior force, that the envoys actually departed in terror and reported to their lord that his army was not a match against such forces. I have noticed several times, in conversation with Mandarins, that they did not admire but despised physical courage. They admit that it is useful occasionally, and that one must keep people who possess it; only they are not higher types of men; joy in fighting is to them a proof of vulgarity. They regarded the soldier as standing below the scholar, comparable rather with a bulldog than with man.

We too are undoubtedly gravitating towards a condition in which the virtues of the warrior will lose in importance, and in which the failings of this type will seem greater than its advantages; and from many points of view this is desirable. But we will pay dearly for its advantages: we will become philistines, unprepared for sacrifice, and we will lose in nobility of outlook. Unfortunately, as things happen to be, the ideal of eternal peace is absolute only in relation to heaven. We who dwell upon earth require the instigation of material danger if we are to remain capable of idealism. How little round the world is, in spite of Galileo! Duelling is a very barbarous invention which must disappear. Even to-day it is contradictory to the whole of the rest of our attitude to life. Nevertheless, the human types who fight duels are in many ways superior to those who have got beyond this stage. Their prejudice forbids them in all circumstances to give in to natural fear, and it teaches them to act in accordance with the recognition that there are higher values than life; above all it educates them, in forcing them to allow their opponent equal chances of victory, to show respect in the highest sense to the personality of another.

The turbid stream of the Yang-Tse rolls on before me. Thousands of sweating coolies toil away on the steamers and

junks, loading, dragging, carrying, pushing, jerking, pulling, shoving. Such life suits the Chinese better than fighting for their fatherland. Their idealism appears in the manner in which they bear the burden of the day.

44

ON THE YANG-TSE

I AM now gliding on the kindly stream without which the immeasurable reaches of country through which it flows would be so much desert. The fall of the river is considerable; nevertheless, its waters seem hardly to move, so great and heavy is its mass, just as the flight of the wild goose seems slow compared with that of the wren. Everywhere on the shores of the Yang-Tse life is green and flourishes. Wherever I look, I perceive the intelligent activity of the peasants. Wherever I turn, they appear as the very hand of nature.

This is the real, the immortal China. Since I have got to know its flower, I realise with redoubled certainty that the root of the whole of Chinese culture is in its peasantry. If the Confucian system did not represent the spiritualised expression of a fundamentally natural condition, it could never have become the skeleton of the whole of China.

The families which ploughed the fields in the days of Shun and Yao still live on their inherited soil, deeply conscious of their language. They emigrate only rarely. Where the peasant toils during his lifetime, there he also returns to earth. The ploughed field is the cradle of the whole of China. There is no hereditary nobility. Every now and again one man or another succeeds in passing the great examination, and then he rises to a higher position. The mass remains eternally as it was.

I do not know any one who has lived for some period amongst the Chinese peasants who did not learn to love them dearly and even to honour them. In them the virtues of the patriarchal age are really alive. Their life represents, as if it were a matter of course, what Confucius and Mencius have

taught. Here all external order is born from the inner attitude, here no system seems even conceivable which is not based upon natural impulses. When have laws of state been necessary in primeval circumstances, in order to regulate the relation between the various members of the family? It is natural for parents to love their children and vice versa; it is natural to a clan to cling together. The more dense a population is, and the more peaceable and reasonable it is by temperament, the more do the natural elements become moral laws. It is so obvious that an existence such as theirs can only flourish subject to harmonious co-operation, that it appears criminal, because against nature, to disturb such harmony; it is, moreover, so obvious that this inevitable order oppresses no one who welcomes it as the realisation of his wishes, that it seems therefore necessary to develop the natural social impulses as much as possible. In this way, love between members of a family, reverence before age and authority, have been cultivated so intensively by the Chinese peasants that they have become long ago the decisive factors of their souls. Nothing is more natural to primitive man than to generalise to infinity: thus, not only the whole vast empire, but the entire universe, has been understood as a community which is based upon the natural relation between the members of a family. Provided the sons evince the necessary reverence towards their fathers, then the rain will also come at the appropriate season. This ancient Chinese peasant wisdom, of which the simple people were hardly conscious, no matter how much they demonstrated it in life and action, subsequently became articulated by the masters of antiquity. And since they taught what was anyhow at the bottom of men's actions, two things happened: their dicta were recognised as correct without further ado, and now that they had become conscious, they were obeyed with redoubled attention. In this way it happened that Confucianism grew to be China's form of consciousness more and more long after it had represented its form of existence. Confucianism became, of course, more differentiated, clarified and artificial as the nation progressed, but it never lost its original meaning.

This was possible only thanks to the special historical cir-

cumstance that the Chinese have, from the very beginning until the present day, remained a nation of peasants, while no powerful castes were formed whose form of life was opposed to that of the peasants; while the infinitely complicated constitution of later times remained in essence patriarchal until to-day. Thus the dicta of Kung Fu Tse and Mong Tse were never in opposition to practical utility; they always remained appropriate to the age. The more a man was capable of thought, the more he had to be surprised at their wisdom; thus their prestige increased continuously in the course of centuries. And this was necessary if they were to retain their old efficacy. The ideas of the old masters were, no matter how deeply they were rooted in humanity, too simple after all; only uncomplicated, primordial souls can be resolved completely in the order of nature, but the soul remains the foundation of even the most developed individual. Thanks to the prestige which the Confucian dicta enjoyed, the most subtle minds were induced to absorb its meaning profoundly, with the result that that something remained alive, or came to life again, which exists only very exceptionally in the consciousness of non-Chinese men of culture. Hence the nature-like profundity, which generally distinguishes even the most refined Chinese. The feeling for what is original and genuine is always alive in him. The relation of the children to their parents, and vice versa, is understood more profoundly than anywhere in Europe to-day; the impulses of nature are cultivated correspondingly. Hence, even in the most cultivated there is a vital feeling for simplicity and primitiveness, and a vital understanding of the meaning of morality even among those who are decadent themselves. I have never seen a Chinese for whom morality meant anything but cultivated nature. Nevertheless, no Mandarin is as good a Confucian as any peasant in the valley of the Yang-Tse, simply because Confucianism is originally only appropriate to the horizon of the peasant. But as long as there are no castes in China, as long as the peasant remains *the* Chinese and does not alter his character as such, the characteristics will not die out, thanks to which the Chinese appears even to-day morally as the most cultured human being.

As long as. . . . Will the peasant remain the same old individual that he was after this new revolution? And if not, what then? I look with profound melancholy upon the fields and the villages round about, upon the indefatigable country folk who follow their old habitual occupation along the banks of the Yang-Tse. Poverty such as seems typical of the Chinese peasant is, no doubt, an absolute evil—but how is it to be overcome without the instigation to individual egoism by which the moral foundation of the marvellous civilisation of China, the omnipotent family feeling, would be destroyed? There is little to be said for the dirt: but how is cleanliness to be introduced before prosperity has come? It is indeed horrible that so many men die year after year from hunger and pestilence: but where is the excess of population to go to if the self-regulation of nature is broken? A higher condition of equilibrium is certainly conceivable than the present one, but it will take centuries before it is brought about, and in the meantime the misery will become greater than it was before. What is the kernel of the social evil among us? That men know too much in order to be happy within the narrow limits in which they live, that they do not know enough to understand that this undesirable state of things can only become altered on a large scale in the passage of long periods of time, and that for this reason a violent attempt to get beyond such a state of affairs must inevitably lead to making it worse. In America it is undoubtedly desirable to let every one learn as much as he wants to, for there the opportunities for success are so many that every talented individual can hope to fight his way through. In more narrowly confined Europe this is possible only exceptionally, and it would therefore be better if the temptations were not made too great. In the overpopulated and correspondingly poor realm of China, with its rigid social order, that which is a misfortune for Europe will undoubtedly assume the nature of a calamity. Thus, the traditional happiness of the Chinese is at an end in all, even the most favourable, circumstances.

The path of progress represents itself as an endless series of intimate tragedies. Happiness depends exclusively upon inner

circumstances, it cannot be adduced from the outside: to this extent progress seems purposeless, even harmful. A given unalterable condition produces in the long run, of its own accord, the inner outlook thanks to which it becomes bearable; in changing circumstances man loses his inner equilibrium. The problem consists in acquiring an inner condition which could do justice to all external circumstances, that is to say, which would make him independent of them in practice, and that means a condition of the highest culture. Thus, whereas, under stationary conditions, every individual shares happiness potentially, only higher individuals do so in changing circumstances. Here the masses are condemned to permanent unhappiness. Perhaps this is the intention of Providence in so far as it exists, for man develops undoubtedly more rapidly in adversity than in happiness; perhaps it is well that a period of necessarily increasing misery has fallen upon humanity. But it is tragic that it welcomes this period as one of greater happiness, for the inevitable disappointment will raise its dissatisfaction inordinately.

The involuntary attitude of the well-intentioned man of culture towards this fate is one of wanting to stop it. For this reason all really cultured Chinese are reactionary. But they would be more wise if they fought against their sympathies. They ought, as far as possible, to anticipate the future condition of equilibrium and present this as an example to the masses, for only in this way will they be able to help them. The ideals of the olden days have abdicated; the past type of perfection can no longer be regarded as exemplary. It is the duty of the cultured, the aristocrats, in China, as everywhere else, not to immortalise a past perfection, but to fashion as soon as possible, from their better insight, the type which can paint the way to the humanity of to-morrow.

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THE captain tells me of the time when he sailed up and down the Yang-Tse as a young officer: in those days everything was different. How delightful it was then to negotiate with the Chinese merchants! They were true to their contracts and

never broke them, and generally a verbal agreement was sufficient. They were as reliable and honest as any English firm. To-day one had to watch them ever so closely; they cheated wherever they could do so. This was the result of their contact with American business organisations. Well, perhaps it was not the Americans alone who had brought bad customs to the East; most Europeans had behaved there in a manner which would make them impossible at home. The more I see and experience, the more certain I am that where inner culture is not of the most unusual kind, that which is good is preserved only in so far as it is demonstrably useful. In all close communities it is most useful to be good, and for this reason nations as well as castes, guilds as well as criminals, wherever they are far-sighted enough, maintain a certain minimum of moral principles. And goodness proves itself proportionately more useful, the more active intercourse and the greater the turnover becomes, so that honesty is frequently absolute in very large business organisations. Thus, we modern Europeans, as long as we do business with one another, are presumably the most honest dealers who have ever lived. But that our morality is nothing primary, but purely the result of circumstances, is proved with horrifying clarity as soon as we transfer our activities beyond our own circle: there we behave like wild beasts. The cultured Chinese among themselves refer to us as 'pirates,' and this description is certainly not too severe. Since I have stayed in the East, I can, unfortunately, doubt no longer that our moral culture is purely external.

Fortunately, goodness proves itself everywhere in the long run to be most useful, so that the white man will one day not be able to be anything but decent and honourable, even in the East. But it makes one feel ashamed to think that the majority among us have remained morally quite crude, in spite of Christianity, the ideal of humanity, and the most well-thought-out systems. If God suddenly destroyed the whole of our external machinery, we would appear as pure barbarians. A similarly threatening God would not need to strike terror into the Chinese: what they possess of morality (and that is more

than most of us possess), is conditioned inwardly, not externally. Of course, it is not independent of externals—if it were, the Chinese would be demigods; the culture of the individual would never have gone so far without the compulsion of the closest living together under difficult circumstances; if the merchants are less honest than in former days, they are also taking the external circumstances into account. But their feeling for morality represents a primary factor in their souls, not a secondary one, as in our case. Therefore they appear, seen from God's point of view, morally superior to us, even where their actions are more immoral. During my stay in China I often thought of the thesis of Paul Dubois, that an uncertain feeling for the difference between good and evil is a sign of stupidity; it was a question of purely objective circumstances, which one either recognised or not, concerning which there could not be two equally valid opinions, just as little as over the problem as to whether twice two makes four or five. No Chinese seems as 'stupid' (or, more correctly, 'uncultured') in this direction, as most European men (women are much more cultured); the Chinese, no matter how dubious his action—action depends upon character—probably always knows what is right. He knows it, however, because this side of his soul stands on a high level of culture, thanks to Confucianism. Is it not about time that we too educated our children in this Confucian manner? Sooner or later this will undoubtedly happen; it is to be hoped that it does not happen too late. Our self-sufficient men of ethics and morals ought to be compelled to have intercourse with cultured Chinese for at least a year (just as I recommended all those interested in religion to spend a year in Benares): those whose souls are not completely blind would recognise in surprise that these gentlemen, no matter how 'immoral' they may be according to European ideas, no matter how histrionic they are, no matter how much they dissemble, how much they lie, how unabashedly they visit brothels, and no matter how unimposing their character is as a rule, stand on an incomparably higher level of moral culture than most of the men of our race. The mere concept of moral culture is strange to the average European.

He imagines that, with the quality of 'character,' everything is said and done. But what does character mean? It means the solidity of a given psychic organism. But this is purely a question of physiology and has nothing to do with morality. Just as it is exquisite when a morally cultured individual evinces firmness, it is horrible if a coarse one does the same. By breeding for character we have given a more durable raw material of soul to the world than the whole East can show. But more than this has not been achieved up to to-day. The time has come to begin to elaborate it.

I wish the missions would be forbidden on the part of governments. Their single members are often altogether venerable, but in moral culture they stand, almost without exception, too far below those whom they come to 'convert' not to do much more harm than good. One should not send hobbledehoys as teachers to cultured people, even if they are better men.

✦

A STORM is raging on the Yang-Tse. When I lie there with my eyes shut and listen to the voices of the water and the air, I cannot help fancying that I am on the ocean. And when I look up I am disappointed by the spectacle of dirty furrowed water. It is better to keep one's eyes shut. As I open them again after a while, my consciousness being entirely enthralled by the sounds round about, it seems to me as if everything had changed: I perceive huge waves beneath me, a raging sea; only I float so high above them that they appear quite small.

It is an old and favourite game of mine to imagine small things great and great things small; a game which provides much amusement. To see cañons in sand-purls and the sea in puddles—this requires no exertion of the imagination, and the inner enrichment which one experiences in the process is great. One may thus witness catastrophes of nature without ever having left one's native soil. . . . And yet no amount of imagination helps us beyond our essential limitation. What difference is there *as such* between a puddle and the ocean? Only that of absolute size. Both are facts in the same sense;

the ocean is not richer in problems; every atom is a solar system and can be imagined as such without further ado. And yet, only that which is great in relation to us calls forth great feelings in us. This shows how lamentably dependent we are on external stimulus. A powerful shock raises even the philistine high above himself; on the other hand, a genius can only fulfil his destiny absolutely in the midst of favourable surroundings. One ought to get so far as to become entirely independent of the accident of one's external surroundings; that is to say, one ought to have such complete mastery over one's inner surroundings—one's given psycho-physical organism—that, by changing it at will, as the chameleon changes his colour, one would attain with certainty what is otherwise only more or less attainable by the shrewd consideration of external influences.

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SHANGHAI

Now I have seen Shen Chi-P'si, the scholar of whom I have heard so much. The expectations with which I looked forward to his acquaintance were great. Almost every time when in Pekin the conversation turned upon European conditions and I had cause to rectify the views of my Chinese friends, they looked at each other meaningly and exclaimed: 'Shen Chi-P'si told us that too; only we did not wish to believe him, because, no matter how learned he may be, he has only occupied himself superficially with Western civilisation.' What kind of a man must he be who understood most things without knowing them! His appearance, the personal contact with him, did not bring me any disappointment. Shen Chi-P'si is the greatest fulfilment of Chinese possibility which I have seen; he is actually a 'Noble One,' as Kong Fu-Tse has delineated him. He is an old man with the fire of a youth; venerable and earnest, as is proper for a sage, and at the same time as graceful in his demeanour as a girl; he is perfect in form and simultaneously all profundity and significance. Shen represents, in an astonishingly high degree, the ideal of

concretion which is the chief characteristic of Chinese culture. In him all personal profundity has become typical form and surface; he makes no gesture which is not in accordance with the Book of Rites, nor does he betray one which did not give adequate expression just to him and only to him. His conversation is singularly instructive. I have never met such profound understanding among Chinese for non-Chinese questions, not to mention Chinese ones. And yet Shen is one of the most extremely orthodox Confucians whom I have known; he is hostile to innovations, reactionary, a scholar of the old school who regards alien literature as hardly worth knowing. He has penetrated so profoundly into himself that everything human is a matter of course to him, while the fewest of external considerations suffice for him in order to anticipate every human significance. I realise once more that every manifestation, even the most limited, is a possible expression of the infinite.

I am thankful for having seen this image of human perfection with my very own eyes. For a long time I intended to write a general summary of the nature of the Chinese, but I always waited in case I should encounter some fact which would demand the enlargement of its scope. I will not meet a richer nature, a more perfect culture in China than is embodied in Shen. Therefore, I may to-day, with the concrete vision before my eyes, proceed to the execution of my intention with a good conscience. I must summarise and illuminate from one single source what I have noticed and written down independently during my stay in China.

Let it be well understood that I am to-day concerned with the definition of the general characteristics of the Chinese, not with their concrete and specialised embodiments; I am concerned solely with that which, on the one hand, can be described *in abstracto*, and has, on the other, symbolical significance for the whole of mankind. The concrete Chinese substance is an absolutum, which can neither be deduced nor delineated as an example; this essential substance remains outside the limit of my observations. Only this much I will put down while the impression of Shen Chi-P'si is fresh in my mind: the Chinese

substance is something very great, a life-force which, in power if not in richness, can hardly be excelled.

✦

THE Chinese is unquestionably less individualised than the European; a man like Shen is much nearer to a coolie than an intellectual is to an agricultural labourer among us; this strikes one all the more as the differences between the classes in China are very much greater than in our case, which counteracts the relation described above. Even the greatest Chinaman is *not* personality in Goethe's sense. Thus, certain definite limits which cannot be exceeded are laid down for him: everything which presupposes a differentiated consciousness of uniqueness or singularity is beyond his power: thus, individual characterisation, individualised love, especially that infinite and yet purely personal love which Christ is supposed to feel for every soul; Chinese charity represents, where it exists, no personal relation to the individual, but rather, like Stoic humanity, an abstract one in relation to generality. For this reason the Chinese lacks the personally creative quality which necessarily presupposes the consciousness of uniqueness; for this very reason he is an intellectual! Intellectualism is produced everywhere as the subjective reflection of objective uniformity; where a non-individualised type of men (which *nota bene* is never the earliest!—primitive people are much more individualised than the Chinese) is gifted with considerable intelligence, it professes without exception the ideal of uniformity, of systematisation; it postulates unlimited possibilities for generalisation, for nothing is so natural to intellect as generalising. Where the facts thoroughly justify this process—the more non-individualised a people, the more do general and abstract considerations do justice to the individual—the original inclination is strengthened in the course of time. Thus, a further barrier is set to the possibilities of mental life. The Chinese as an intellectual has no conscious relation to metaphysical reality; he remains, so far as he thinks, on the surface of things.

It is most significant that the Chinese, in spite of these bar-

riers, is our equal in all essential mental directions; the recognition and expression of essential Being do not presuppose a condition of individualisation. As a mystic he is the equal of the greatest Europeans and Indians, for mystic recognition implies realising the fundamental principle of life which is the same everywhere. The Chinese possesses a direct relation to absolute goodness and beauty because the realisation of the absolute ideal is exclusively the function of perfection and independent of the nature of its elements. Wherever essentials are in question, there is no trace of narrowness in him. This is so, because Being lies at a greater depth than individuality. This truth China has demonstrated for all time.

In so far as the Chinese is not very individualised, one may say that he is on a lower level of nature than we are. No matter how little I like the dogma of evolution: a man as a mental being does develop in the sense of progressive differentiation, and in this way we have got further than the Chinese. But equally certainly, we have gone less far than they have in culture, for this depends upon the degree to which a given natural condition has been developed. In cultural accomplishment the Chinese is the most advanced man; the whole of his natural disposition is transfused with spirit, and its expression seems perfect everywhere. Thus the example of China proves something more: that culture belongs to a different dimension from progress. It proves yet another thing: that ultimately everything depends upon education in its widest sense, because on and in spite of his low natural level, the Chinese has approached more nearly than we have done hitherto to the realisation of the ideal of humanity.

Accordingly, the nature of the Chinese represents, on the one hand, a rest from past stages of development, and, on the other, an anticipation of the ideal of the future. For me there can be no doubt that the most highly developed individuals of future times will be nearer to the traditional Confucian than to the modern man, that the social order of the future will be more akin to that of the Chinese than what is hoped for by our Utopians. The man of the future will surely be autonomous; there will not be many external barriers, and the existing ones

will be condemned as *pis-aller*, as has been the case in China for thousands of years. But men will of their own accord, from their own higher insight, mark their own limitations; they will think superindividually, not individually. This stage of perfected superindividual thought will, however, be more closely akin to the subindividual thought of China than to our modern thinking.

The traditional Chinese type, accordingly, has much the same relation to the highest conceivable condition of humanity as the mythically expressed wisdom of the ancients has to its scientific confirmation in a more precise form. To go beyond the Rishis in significance is hardly possible; but the same recognition can be better expressed. Just so Chinese culture will never be excelled in significance. As far as expression is concerned, its insufficiency is connected, in all principal points, with their intellectualism. The ideal of concretion, in itself an absolute one for this world, becomes realised in China, not in the perfection of incomparable unique souls, but in the perfect presentation of a norm, with the result that the profoundest elements in men remain untouched. The highest aim would be to realise the ideal of concretion by means of the pure subjective self. The profoundest layer in man is pure subjectivity, which cannot be made objective nor taken hold of from the outside; it is our problem to live directly in it and by it. The Chinese does this indirectly through self-surrender to objective wisdom. Such wisdom, no matter how profound and embracing it may be, does not do justice to particular phenomena, it is only cognisant of types; it must externalise, since it does not take the individual soul as a starting-point, but the abstract relations which exist between many; it must level, because it only considers generalities; and the harmony which it creates eventually lives at the expense of possible wealth. If one day we succeed, by means of the free initiative of perfectly developed individualities who strive with singleness of purpose after their personal perfection, in creating a harmony as complete as that which exists in China, then the social ideal will have been realised.

One word more in connection with our greater originality

compared with the people of the East. It does not imply an unqualified advantage, for it is compensated by a correspondingly poorer memory. East and West embody, at the moment, the opposite poles of life, that of innovation and that of memory. The stereotyped quality of nature is nothing but memory, her new creations mean nothing else than inventions, and both together seem indispensable for the continuation of the world. Actually, however, new formations and tenacity to existing forms are mutually exclusive. Almost every creative spirit has complained of a bad memory, most people with a good one have few ideas. The power of memory of people in the East is overwhelming; it might almost be defined as the incapacity to forget. No less enormous is the durability of the forms of life there, and their physical vitality. Cultural formations degenerate in the East as slowly as those of nature do in the whole world. We degenerate as soon as we do not progress. This is due to the fact that we have bad memories. The continuation of our existence seems possible only in so far as we continue to invent. Will we be able to continue invention for ever? Or will we one day swing across to the opposite pole of life? Or will we disappear altogether from this planet after a brief and hasty course? No one can tell.

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TO-MORROW I leave the Middle Kingdom; what do I take away with me? More instruction than I shall be able to utilise in the course of years. And yet I feel unsatisfied: no matter how much China has given me, it has not changed me; I pass from it almost exactly as I came. Contrary to my own temperament, I have been an observer here from the beginning to the end; no matter how much I have been absorbed in the Chinese, the period of being different seems to have meant remarkably little to me. How strange: China has impressed me more than any other country; it has taught me an immeasurable amount; I have, moreover, developed a real affection for it. And yet I pass from it with a slight feeling of resentment.

When I reflect on this feeling I discover its cause soon enough. I have gained less from China than from other coun-

tries, objectively less interesting, in the same sense as Agra meant little to me in comparison with the wilderness of the Himalayas, and just as all art in general has always meant little to me compared with nature. In regarding the art of men, with the exception of the greatest, I never get beyond my original possibilities; I learn, perhaps, to speak new languages, to express myself better in the ones that I know, I become conscious of sides in myself which I would otherwise have overlooked, but I remain confined in my humanity with its narrow boundaries. This typical misfortune has overtaken me in China to an unusual degree, because the Chinese, of all people, are—the most human; they have gone further than any others in the differentiation of their peculiarity. And although they have expressed, in a degree hitherto unattained, in the particular what is generally human, and in the human that which is more than human, the very exhaustive nature of the expression brings it about that the resultant picture represents something all too human. To carry moral culture so far that the outer order appears as the necessary result of free wills interfering with each other is no doubt a supreme achievement, but simultaneously it is all too human, for only men perfect themselves in the social community. To stylise emotional life to such a degree that objective ritual appears as the adequate expression of subjective impulses—that is equally a supreme achievement, but it is also equally all too human: for urbanity is only in question for men. The Chinese possesses, as the most deeply rooted being, the most universal background, but what is universal has been squeezed in his case into what is purely human, with the result that the human quality appears enhanced to an incredible degree. I too am, until further notice, a human being; and if I tarry in the atmosphere of heightened humanity, then my limitedness also becomes increased. I am in danger of becoming crystallised in my peculiarity, and that is what I fear.

If only Chinese civilisation were difficult to understand as a phenomenon, which can be said in a high degree of the Indian civilisation, then it would nevertheless possess stimulating powers. Ants must seem uninteresting to other ants because

every one of them exhausts the nature of ants as completely as a statue of Phidias exhausts the possibilities of Greek physique, so that none offers something new to another, but their contemplation helps me nevertheless, because entering with my feelings into their 'all-too-ant-like' nature at any rate draws me away from the 'all-too-human' quality. In relation to the Chinese I am as one ant to another; of all nations they are the most immediately intelligible. The matter-of-factness of their fundamental temperament, the predominance of common sense over the imagination, their delight in the obvious, their cult of the classical ideal, result in the fact that none of their manifestations, no matter how intricate it may appear at a distance, offers the least difficulty to the intelligence of any one who examines it minutely. There is no Chinese ideal which could not serve as an example for every one, there is no *chinoiserie* to which every one could not do justice. Thus there is nothing in the atmosphere of Chinese culture which stimulates the mind as such: it confirms one, on the contrary, in the routine of humanity.

It is true that Chinese nature is grand; on the few occasions on which its spirit got hold of me, I advanced inwardly tremendously. But in China, men have placed nature in the background as nowhere else; here, culture rules supreme. In Europe this is not the case half so much, in spite of the greater efficacy of our cultural methods, because there man, in order to control nature, has entered into its own meaning and therefore enhanced its manifestations; in China, one sees the most intense human culture impressed as it were upon an inert soil. For this reason the contemplation of Chinese nature helps one only exceptionally beyond the human realm. How tragic that the highest manifestation in itself no longer stimulates the mind, but blunts it! One no longer feels the perfectly expressed primordial force; where all possibilities have been exhausted, nothing remains for the mind to wish for. The 'Russian man' appears to the Western European of to-day as the most primordial of all; that is because he is the most unaccomplished of all talented people, the most opposed to the Chinese. He is intrinsically no more primordial than the latter. If I

have learnt anything in China, it is that perfection does not lead to diminished spontaneity (no matter how often it does so); the civilised individual does not need to be less vital than the barbarian. The appearance of the essential lifelessness of expressed forms is purely due to the fact that they do not stimulate the observer. Plants and animals are not denied originality by any man, and they are more perfect in their sphere than any man has ever been because they do stimulate him; in order to understand them, he must himself create the transition from appearance to significance, and for this reason that which strikes him as rigid and lifeless among his peers seems to animate him here. But this recognition alters nothing in the fact that the perception of accomplishment does not induce continued creation in the mind. For this reason, the product of culture is less significant for us than that of nature; for the same reason I part with less benefit from the most civilised humanity which exists than I parted from the primeval forests of Ceylon.

The contemplation of Chinese civilisation throws much light upon the relation of nature and spirit. I wrote it down already in the Himalayas: creation expresses its principle without being the principle itself. The appearances of culture are, as such, no nearer to their spiritual cause than those of nature; they too are 'nature,' not 'spirit'; here, too, as soon as manifestation has become perfect, it is all over with spontaneity. From the metaphysical point of view there is no difference between dead institutions and the array of the stars. In the routine of judicial proceedings no more living spirit is manifested than in the circulation of heavenly bodies. Thus also, Chinese civilisation in its present typical shape is 'nature,' not 'spirit'; it is no form of freedom.

All freedom is fulfilled in limitation. For the moment, however, I am satiated with fulfilment; I long for the ecstasy of innovation: most of all I long to be away from that which is all too human. I almost wish I already had Japan behind me, and were sailing for the South Seas, where there are said to be such strange and weird-looking fishes.

PART SIX: JAPAN

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THROUGH YAMATO

I BEGIN my stay in Japan with a walking tour through Yamato, that province with which the oldest and holiest traditions of the country are associated. It is the time for the pilgrimages to the Buddhistic sanctuaries. All the streets and forests are teeming with life; half Japan seems to be on holiday excursions. I share, as far as possible, the life of my fellow-travellers, I try to think and to feel with them and to perceive with their senses.

The nature of Japan is probably unrivalled in delicacy and wealth. There are a surprising number of different conifers, the leaf-bearing trees are marvellously manifold, and no artist could have contrasted the colour and form perceived at various levels more artistically. Small wonder that the Japanese are endowed with much feeling for natural form! Just as the man whom a happy fate has brought up in the midst of art treasures which he was allowed to regard, not as some strange magnificence, but as his natural surroundings, possesses, even if only mediocrely gifted, such taste and an eye for art by nature as an artistically much more gifted child of barbaric countries can acquire only exceptionally—it is in the same sense that a richly differentiated nature is beneficial in effect. In latitudes where the contrasts of light and colour are so great that their delicate shades remain unnoticed, the nation with the greatest visual gifts does not achieve as much in landscape painting as in districts possessing more favourable conditions of light refraction; it is not for nothing that the landscape painting of the West flourished and accomplished most in Holland, and not in Italy. Now as to Japan, it simply compels the eye to perceive just those relations of colour and form which characterise Japanese art. A specific scale of values is revealed there as a fact of nature. And once it has been perceived and understood, then an artistic mind continues to create in accordance with it involuntarily. This process, this continuing to compose in the spirit and meaning of nature, has been practised by the artists

of the Far East from early days with an understanding never evinced by us. It is as if nature's own struggle for beauty had become conscious in them, as if man was the special organ by means of which Nature attained her final perfection; here man seems, as it were, responsible for the extremest harmony. Whence this marvellous ability? The explanation is to be found in the method of visual training. Chinese and Japanese painters are Yogis; they do not regard nature from the outside, but they become absorbed in it as the mystics become absorbed in God. In this process they get beyond their humanity and become one with the spirit of nature. For man is not only man, he is simultaneously, in various parts of his being, animal, plant, rock and sea; only he rarely becomes conscious of the fact and only knows how to feel as a human being. If, however, he learns to be at one with what apparently lives as something strange outside him, then he can bring it forth out of himself. Thus, there really dwells, in Far Eastern landscape pictures, the life of the landscape; thus the Japanese succeed almost playfully in utilising nature artistically and yet as nature. The incredible perfection of Japanese flower decorations is due to the fact that the very spirit of the flowers arranges the nosegay into a nosegay; professionally cultivated forests are not ugly in Japan, as in Germany, because here men, instead of imposing their intention upon the trees, assist them in doing what they would like to do themselves. The natural rotation of the plants is taken into consideration, never forgetting the special conditions of the soil. And if an overgrown tree on a slope forms a beautiful silhouette, well, they let it stand there, even if, from a forestry point of view, it ought to be cut down.

Of course, to travel so far in the understanding of nature, one must be a Japanese. I do not believe that a gardener of any other people would know how to dwarf trees in the Japanese sense, without any violation of nature: as far as I can see, there is no teachable method for it, it depends entirely upon an inner understanding. Every morning the 'tree-trainer' looks at his little plants carefully, and then takes away—a leaf or a shoot! Why just this one? He could not tell you

himself; but he knows that just this organ must be extirpated in order that the inner impulse for growth does not lead beyond the prescribed dimension, and his success justifies him almost every time. Such powers of intuition can probably not be explained; one has to let them pass as miraculous. But it seems certain to me, anyhow, that the marvellously different shades in Japanese nature, the alteration in living manifestations which is brought about in Japan by the slightest change in the soil, is an important consideration in the development of existing talent. I too am beginning to observe, as I have never observed before; it seems to me as if I had been blind until a few days ago. And I enjoy the wondrous gift of vision so intensely that I cannot watch the otherwise so welcome twilight without regret.

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I AM now tramping through distant valleys which are hardly ever visited by white men. To the villagers I am the object of unending amusement. They are as friendly and obliging as they possibly can be, only they laugh, wherever I turn, because of what seems to them my superhuman stature. This morning, as I was climbing up a steep mountain path, I suddenly felt myself pushed from behind; when I turned round, two exceedingly pretty girls laughed and ran away: they had wanted to find out how heavy I was. There is something marvellous about the nature of backwoodsmen. I know it well from my home. Every time I visit my out-of-the-way forest estates, I find a new opportunity for reverential surprise at the importance of the most everyday events within small circles, and I notice how enormously a narrow perspective enhances the significance of what is not a portion of the daily round. My keeper hardly regards the itinerant workmen from the islands, who speak a different Esthonian dialect from his own, as human beings; they are strangers to him. He reports to me: 'Lately a certain Michael lived here—no one knows exactly where he comes from—his manner is queer—something seems to be wrong with him.' This Michael then proves to be the most trivial of all average creatures, but he stands out against

the everyday background of the backwoodsman as a figure as big, as plastic, as gigantic as a hero of Homer. And how perfect these backwoodsmen are! Among the lower classes of our time, form and content amalgamate into unity perhaps only in them. In order to be perfect in ample circumstances, one must have many generations behind one which have enlarged one's horizon and one's natural sphere of activity; it does not happen all at once from to-day to to-morrow. Thus, in the rapidly moving modern world in which the peasant's son often ends as a rich citizen, only what is eccentric appears interesting; it is not for nothing that the writers of our day have a predilection for criminals, psycho-pathological individuals and swindlers. This implies, of course, *à faute de mieux*, that concentric perfection is the higher value. Eccentricity is essentially exclusive, concentricity essentially inclusive, and for this reason the concentric man is, in all circumstances, the richer, profounder and more substantial; he alone can express flawlessly the deepest being in his own appearance. Among backwoodsmen every one preserves his peculiarity and it is readily recognised in every one; in the wide amorphous mass each and all want to be alike. Their essential formlessness conditions a more slavish adherence to convention. The sum of all the figures has, as it were, to produce the form which no single figure possesses in itself.

The nature of the Japanese backwoodsman is more sympathetic to me than that of any other which I have ever seen. It possesses all the sweetness, gentleness, thoughtfulness, all the charm and good-heartedness which have made the lower classes of these latitudes seem so lovable to me since I have read Lafcadio Hearn. These poor people here *are* lovable. Their politeness undoubtedly comes from the heart; I have noticed no greed or the wish to take unfair advantage of one. Perhaps they show me their best side because, following the suggestion of my companion, a young poet from Kyoto, I treat them as at home, as a feudal lord, I treat my patriarchally minded peasantry. In the out-of-the-way valleys of Yamato the Middle Ages are not yet past; there the era of Meiji has hardly begun; there the peasants still expect superiority, mag-

nanimity, distance, from their lord, they expect that consciousness of absolute superiority which, for this very reason, allows extreme familiarity. There they still want to look up. How gladly I reverted to a part which our world offers less and less opportunity for playing! And the practical result was that people were found everywhere who rendered me services and showed attention without wishing to accept payment for it.

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I AM halting in a prosperous village close to a foaming river full of trout. Where in the world is the child of the people anything like as cultured as in Japan? Whatever he does displays culture; he permits nothing unclean or ugly; the most exquisite consideration controls the behaviour of every one to each other. And especially as far as the children are concerned, I have never seen such delightful ones anywhere. They hardly ever appear to be unruly, which is apparently due to the fact that they are treated with complete understanding, and are yet never spoilt: even the tiniest have consideration impressed upon them. There is incredibly little selfishness here; every one seems to live joyfully for others, contributing his portion so that the whole shall become as harmonious as possible.

In idea it is the same in China. When Confucianism came to Japan, its inhabitants accepted it as the transfigured and deepened expression of that which had always been habitual to them, and the perfect expression of its own led to deeper understanding and the consolidation of traditional customs. None the less: what a difference compared with the Middle Kingdom! Confucianism is cautious peasant wisdom, the Japanese culture of consideration seems to me to be something instinctive, I would almost like to say an animal impulse. The Japanese are cleanly as cats are cleanly, they are polite in the same way in which penguins are polite, they are considerate of each other with the same matter-of-courseness with which mothers love their children; thus, their expression is of a piece with the perfection of animals. The Japanese have nothing of Chinese profundity and gravity. They seem to me to be superficial, poor in imagination, matter of fact to an almost inhuman

degree; simultaneously, they are extraordinarily susceptible, possessing sensitivity in the widest sense as no Chinese does. Their whole sphere of sensation seems to be 'pervious' in the same sense as only compassion is among us. That which is based upon metaphysical realisation with the Chinese rests upon physiological sensitiveness with them.

I am reminded of Sontoku Ninomiya, that peasant sage who did so much for his countrymen in the first half of the nineteenth century, the description of whose life and whose doctrines has since then been distributed among the people as a gospel by the Government.[1] I must think of this simple countryman, who embarked upon a life of complete unselfishness as soon as he had worked his way up from direst poverty, and did not cease to toil endlessly and exclusively up to the hour of his death for the improvement of the conditions of others: according to the letter, he was a genuine Confucian, nor did he consider himself to be anything else. In reality he was absolutely unique, a man who in the whole of Asia was conceivable only on Japanese soil. He lacked the wide horizon of the Chinese sages, he lacked their omniscience and their universal outlook; regarded philosophically, he was superficial. But, thanks to his capacity for sympathy and the energy which he had at his disposal, he achieved more in practice, even if on a small scale. Sontoku was, at bottom, a Christian; his problems were those of the Christian love of one's neighbour. Can this be the main cause of the fact that the Japanese have Westernised themselves so quickly and successfully? We too are less thoughtful and profound than the Chinese and the Indians; we are merely more energetic and more sensitive. Probably, what we call Christian love is determined much more physiologically than theologically.

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THE Japanese are, no doubt, closely related to us in many ways; now that I have turned my attention to the matter, it

[1] The title of this book is *Hotokuki;* it has been translated into English by Todasu Yoshimoto and published by Longmans, Green & Co. under the title *A Peasant Sage of Japan.*

strikes me more and more. The energy of the Japanese, too, is kinetic, and his consciousness is turned towards the outside, but above all he is equally curious and keen on innovation as we are. Regarded metaphysically, is it not perhaps accidental that his culture is nevertheless an expression of the Chinese spirit? I have endeavoured, during these days which I have spent uninterruptedly in the company of pilgrims, to enter into the soul of the Japanese, and the little which I have recognised so far hardly permits me to doubt any longer that this people would have become quite different under different influences. I am all the more grateful for the fact that history did not take another course, but just the one it did: the Japanese people owes its singular charm undoubtedly to the Chinese schooling; all the manifestations which delight me are familiar to me in idea from China. And so I ask myself how we Northern barbarians would have developed if we had been subjected to Chinese influences instead of to Greco-Roman ones: would we perhaps have got further than we have done? Presumably we would, even then, be 'Christians' under one name or another; we would be as energetic, inventive and active as we are; æsthetically and morally, we would surely be much more cultured. We would be less advanced in technicalities, and there would not be industrial towns upon earth even to-morrow. But would this have involved any intrinsic disadvantage, if the Germanic races had drawn their cultural treasures, not from Rome, but from Loyang? I do not know. It is difficult for me to judge without bias, because I notice in Europeans mainly what they lack, and in the Asiatics what speaks in their favour.

47

IN THE MONASTERY OF KOYA-SAN

I AM ending my wanderings through Yamato with a pilgrimage to the mountain Koya-San, whose summit is crowned with the most famous monastery of Japan. It lies in the shade of conifers hundreds of years old. I never saw a more holy

grove. Of all the trees which I know, the cryptomeria calls to life religious associations most compellingly and powerfully. This tree has the duskiness of the cypress yew-tree, it symbolises joyful hope like the Thuga; at the same time it has the majesty, the cosmic power and immortal quality of the fir-tree.

The monastery is a typically Japanese building. It consists of low houses built of wood, with beautifully curved roofs, and is surrounded by attractive gardens; I expected the same atmosphere of delicacy and charm as elsewhere when I beheld something similar in Japan. Instead of this, there is an air about the place which I am familiar with from Europe, but which, in spite of everything I have learned since, I did not expect to breathe in Japan; it is the atmosphere of Christian mediæval monasticism. There is something commanding, even warlike, powerful, violent, in this air, in spite of the gentle charm of all its individual manifestations. I can imagine the monks here just as well fighting as praying; the abbot I can picture best as a prince of the Church in the mediæval sense. And this is a Buddhistic place of pilgrimage! How far away are those hot regions, where gentle, dark-coloured men and women bring their floral offerings to the Buddhas who squat placidly on their thrones! The spirit which dominates Koya is not a spirit of sufferance and non-volition, not the spirit of longing to be out of the turmoil of the world; it is absolutely alien to the spirit of India. It is essentially one with the spirit which animated our ancestors, from the days of the Carolingians to the end of the Middle Ages.

I try to visualise what I know of the history of Japanese Buddhism. In the frontier districts between India and Central Asia, the land of Gandhara, a wonderful religion came to be developed in the course of the first centuries after Christ. According to the letter, it was the religion of Buddhism, according to the spirit, a variety of the Bhakti, the emotionalistic form of expression of Brahmanism, in which the divinity bears a personal character and in which faith and love pass as the cardinal virtues; but according to its dogmatic concepts, it was something completely new for India: a religion of salvation in the Christian sense. At that time a longing for salva-

tion filled the whole world. All over the surface of the earth communities sprang up whose centre was a past, present or future Messiah, the air was pregnant with the expectation of revelation, and the spirit of the age seemed uniform, from Alexandria to the Far East, to a degree such as has never been the case since. Indian teachings had found their way to Egypt and vice versa, doctrines from Syria and Asia Minor, among these Christianity in its many varieties, had penetrated with the merchants as far as China, the Greek sphere of ideas had taken firm root in the valley of Kabul, together with the Greco-Parthian princes, with the result that all local religions were either transformed or at any rate fructified by the universal spirit of that epoch. In this way, Christianity, originally an unimportant and limited belief of an obscure sect, was developed in the West into a grand, all-embracing world religion; the same thing happened with Buddhism in Gandhara. Gautama, the man, became transformed into a god, who had assumed human shape for the salvation of the whole of creation; the specifically Indian doctrine of salvation by recognition gave way more and more to the specifically Catholic doctrine of salvation by faith. Buddhism was eventually changed from a philosophical conception of the world, which knew of neither God nor soul, into a Church which differed from the Christian in nothing fundamental.

It will probably never be decided which influences played the chief part in this transformation; but it may safely be supposed that all influences which were in question at all contributed to this result, in view of the great plasticity of Mahayana, the general Oriental tendency not to take manifestations seriously metaphysically, and the specifically Indian inclination to stress the common factor of various elements. Among others, Christianity, which began just at that time to develop into a great spiritual power in its Gnostic, Ophitic and Nestorian varieties in Central Asia, played its part. Still, Mahayana remained purely Indian in its nature for a long time; India's superior spirit gave life to the body of its mental images, no matter whence they may have been derived. Even in China, the new Buddhism remained essentially Indian. But when it

reached Japan it changed fundamentally very soon: it was substantially influenced (what had hardly happened in China) by the practical spirit of Confucianism, which had penetrated to Japan a little earlier, and it was soon wedded and partially intermingled with the local worship of gods and ancestors. It was a religion of soldiers. Buddhism in Japan adapted itself more and more to the knightly spirit. This explains why it is here so reminiscent of the spirit of our Middle Ages.

Japanese Buddhism is indeed fundamentally different from the Buddhism which Gautama, the ascetic, had founded once upon a time. But the man who would say thereupon that it is not Buddhism at all but Christianity, could be told with justice by a Japanese that our Christianity, too, cannot be regarded really as Christianity. The idea of a saviour, which is common to-day to both religions, was the property of neither originally: it is only St. Paul who transfigured the Jewish Messiah to the Hellenistic σωτήρ. The soul of Egyptian monasticism, whose example has contributed more to the conversion of the West than all gospels and epistles, was the wisdom not of Jesus, but of Egyptian Neo-Platonism; the teaching of Origen (to say nothing of Gnosis) was more akin to the spirit of Iran and Hindustan than to that of Palestine, and that which ultimately penetrated to the barbarians of the north and became the faith of the Crusaders, is something totally different from original Christianity. Nevertheless, Christianity is to be traced back to this original form, more essentially than to apparently more closely related manifestations, so that we are fully justified in calling ourselves Christians. The spiritual forces which are actively manifest in history assume different forms, according to the natures through which they act; they can do so because no definite form is necessary or essential to them. The experience of love in the Christian sense can fall as well to the lot of woman as to that of man, to the man of action as well as to the sufferer, to the priest as well as to the warrior, and it expresses itself differently in each one of them to such an extent that the expressions are often completely contradictory. Nevertheless, they regard themselves as the children of one spirit, and justifiably so;

the peculiar modality of his personal experience, as such, gives the Christian, not this or that profession, this or that method of behaviour; his love was unknown to the Hindus and to the Neo-Platonists; it goes back solely to Jesus. A certain quality of love is the essential quality of Christianity, and this has remained unchanged through all the transformations in appearance, from the days of Jesus to the present age. Just so, Japanese Buddhism, in spite of all foreign influences which have fashioned its empirical nature, is Buddhism in essence. It is not perhaps Buddhism in the same sense in which Christianity is Christianity: the specific charity which animates it is more generally Indian than specifically Buddhist, more in accordance with Krishna than with Gautama; but this Indian form of love penetrates it throughout. And if it manifests itself very differently in Japan from the way it does in India, then this appears as a parallel to what happened within Christendom: Buddhist, like Christian, love is capable of manifold manifestations; both remain essentially what they are, no matter how they are represented. Regarded from the point of view of an absolute ideal, their manifestations appear neither here nor there as of equal value, but they have proved themselves in practice to be equally beneficial, especially from the angle of Buddhist charity, which demands that every phenomenon shall be measured only by the standard of its own possible perfection. It cannot be expected of young, energetic, active men that they should feel love and compassion as a maiden does; they should, whatever happens, act for the sake of good. If they fight, it should be for an ideal, if they flare up, it should be from rage at the oppression of the weak; thus the ideal is brought nearer to realisation even by them. And this takes place quicker than one thinks. Constant action subject to an idea, no matter how little it is understood, prepares the path for the idea to become conscious; even the most hate-inspired battle for the ideal of love develops the capacity for love. There is a profound truth in the myth of a 'Providence,' which, in slow and quiet toil and often contrary to all appearances, turns everything to good account: the spiritual forces which became manifest in Christ and Buddha really continue to

operate unceasingly, and, instead of becoming weaker in the course of time, they become more powerful from millennium to millennium.

Marvellous indeed is the manner in which the same significance conditions similar manifestations everywhere. Unfortunately, our age has little understanding for such processes. The history of Christianity is often regarded as a progressive degeneration, because its development has led away from original Christianity, and the same applies to Buddhism. For the moment I will assume that original Christianity and original Buddhism embody the highest phases: even subject to this supposition, it would be a mistake to place a low value on the later formation, because a highest condition is attainable only by a few chosen individuals, and a world religion which is to save every one must take every one into consideration. It must countenance temporary conditions, it must lead men upwards lovingly, it must give them courage where they would otherwise despair. That is just what the Christian Church, especially in its mediæval phase, understood and achieved in the most masterly manner, and the later forms of the Buddhist Church are animated by the same intention. But original Christianity and original Buddhism do not embody the highest human conditions at all, and thus the whole argument falls to the ground. Christ and Buddha were possibly the greatest of all human beings, and probably attained their supreme perfection, but they were, for all that, definite human beings, their perfection was that of a definite type, namely the ascetic type, and precluded all other forms of perfection. Accordingly, original Christianity as well as original Buddhism were not destined to direct the paths of mankind. They either had to remain limited sects, or they had to enlarge their horizon if they aimed at a wide sphere of effectiveness. This widening has taken place in both cases, and in both cases it has made these religions more profound. The Catholic Church is the profounder system compared with that of the original Christians. It sounds like a dubious compromise, this justification of war by love, of intolerance by generosity, of insufficiency by the perfection in the beyond; in reality it does not refer a lower

condition to a higher one, but it leads the lower towards the higher, and hallows insufficiency as a stage upon the road to the goal. The 'true doctrine' does not lie buried in the original condition, it beckons, rather, as the ideal of a better future. There is no doubt that the sayings of Jesus are understood more profoundly to-day than they were heretofore. But this does not mean that we recognise better what Jesus meant, but that we are understanding more profoundly the true, that is to say the objectively correct, meaning of His wisdom, whether Jesus was aware of it Himself or not. Probably He was not aware of it; His immediate disciples certainly were not, and misunderstanding has governed for a long period most Christian manifestations. But this misunderstanding has prepared the road for recognition; without Catholicism, Reformation and counter-Reformation, without dogmatic conflicts and text-criticism, we would never have got to the point from which we can behold the pure meaning of Christianity.[1]—In the same way Northern Buddhism implies exactly what its followers believe, not a degeneration, but the crowning of Hinayana. Most of its doctrines can hardly be traced back to Gautama. But they are very much nearer to the truth.

I know little which is more profound than the teaching of Acvagosha—nothing more far-sighted, more all-embracing, than the Mahayana system, and this lies at the root of the Japanese Church. But of course, this Church is not what it might have become among Indians; as in our case, misunderstanding has controlled its external development. All the excrescences, re-, mal-, and de-formations which in our case are characteristic, on the one hand, of Catholicism, on the other of Protestantism, can also be established in the case of Japanese Buddhism of to-day. There are sects which concern themselves chiefly with thaumaturgy, others in which a hierarchic system throttles all individual life, and again others which reject all traditional wisdom and teach the individual to rely entirely on his own personal opinion. Even the extremest manifestations which could be expected did not fail to appear:

[1] I have tried to define the Christian doctrine as it will live in the future in my lecture 'Weltanschauung u. Lebensgestaltung' in *Der Leuchter*, 1924.

a religion which laid the greatest stress upon insight has developed into a religion of blind faith. Such a religion is most readily professed by every one for whom thought presents a difficulty. What penetrated to Japan originally was a philosophical conception of the world which could only seem appropriate to Indians, this philosophical nation *par excellence;* it had to be changed in order to persist among the Japanese; and this is what happened. At an early stage reformers appeared, who shaped Mahayana, which in itself is capable of many interpretations, into definite doctrines, which were more in accordance with the Japanese temperament; salvation by faith became more and more the fundamental dogma of Northern Buddhism. And to-day the Shinshu sect, the most superficial of all, according to which the mere calling upon the name of Amida and trust in the efficacy of this practice is said to suffice to guarantee eternal bliss to the faithful, threatens to expel all others from Japan.

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IT is worth a great deal to me that my first personal contact with Japanese Buddhism took place in its own stronghold: here its peculiarity predominates absolutely over those elements which it has in common with other forms of Buddhism. I would never have believed that from Indian foundations something so Western could have developed: for the religion of the monks of Koya-San is far more Western in effect than it is Asiatic. They are remarkably akin to mediæval Christians in type; just what is best in them seems to be the child rather of the Christian than of the Buddhist spirit, in so far as I abstract the latter from what I have seen in Burma and Ceylon. There is something like a specific ecclesiastic head, who is to be found among all peoples; still, no one could mistake a Brahmin for a Catholic prelate. A Japanese abbot, however, could pass for the latter without further ado; his traits are fashioned by a closely related spirit. This is evidently due to the fact that both religions imply objectifications in a similar sense. Even the Tantrikas, the ritualists among the Hindus, for whom strict observance is the only means to salvation, regard appearance nevertheless as Maya, not as necessarily related to

being. For the Catholics, the Church is the living body of Christianity, which can be separated from its soul only by death, and something similar seems to apply to Japanese Buddhism. The latter does not profess a corresponding dogma, on the contrary: in so far as it represents a philosophy it takes appearance no more seriously than Brahmanism; even in Japan, mutually exclusive professions are regarded as equally orthodox. But the hieratic sense of the Chinese, whose primary inclination is to express all content directly and completely in appearance, had given a highly organised body to Buddhism at an early stage, which later grew in Japan, among more versatile people, from a work of art more and more into a living being.

But both Churches—the Catholic and the Buddhist—yet differ from each other most essentially. In the former, what is objective is born of the intellect. No matter how irrational its dogmas may be—their relation and development have been attended by pure reason. One and the same spirit of strict rationality had animated all Christian manifestations of the Middle Ages, from the theodicy to the spiritual hierarchy, from the cathedral to the *summa* of Thomas Aquinas; mankind has never, neither before nor since, attached such weight to symmetry, to clarity and rational cohesion. The Japanese objectification of spirit in the Church is wholly unintellectual, and for this reason it lacks all the advantages which rationality alone supplies. On the other hand, it is artistic in the highest degree; her forms are never allegories, always symbols, and they have all the advantages of an expression whose elements are born of feeling. They are extraordinarily convincing in effect; I recognise them as a matter of course; my soul unconsciously enters into relation with God in Koya-San, in the Buddhist manner. And I am beginning to guess that, in so far as Confucius is right, the Japanese Church may be regarded as the crown of Indian wisdom. Kung Fu Tse taught that only such wisdom was to be regarded as perfect which appeared in the form of charm: this has happened here. It is the genuine spirit of Mahayana, all-embracing, earnest and profound, which animates this form of Buddhism—but its appearance is pure beauty and charm. And this does not estrange me: I have never, on the contrary, felt closer to the

profoundest revelations of Indian wisdom than during the contemplation of Japanese images of Buddha.

But strange: what moves me so much seems to say nothing to the Japanese; nowhere do I feel a direct experience of the harmony of appearance and significance; it seems as if they did not know what they were doing when they materialised the spirit of Mahayana. And as I let my gaze roam once more over the monastery, with its golden temples, its decorative clergy, within the magnificent frame of the cryptomeria grove, suddenly reality is changed for me into a theatrical scene. No, this Church in all its greatness and beauty is quite unsubstantial. It really means nothing except as art. The whole pathos of the Catholic Church is wanting. Where the Christian lives, the Japanese Buddhist only represents. Though this representation may possibly imply the extreme possibilities of his experience. . . .

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I INSPECT the holy places together with the pilgrims who came up with me to Koya. How different these pilgrims are from Indian pilgrims! Only women fairly advanced in years seem to take their journey seriously in the religious sense; the younger women regard it no differently from the men, as a cheerful holiday excursion, during which many new things are to be seen, and they wear the pilgrim garment chiefly from a feeling for style, or from a delight in mummery. They listen to the sagas and the marvellous stories which are connected with the individual temples, with that semi-sceptical credulity with which immature children listen to fairy-tales, and the feeling of piety which takes hold of them in the place where Kobo Daishi, the founder of the monastery, a great magician and miracle-worker, is said to live to-day awaiting the day of his resurrection, contains more curiosity than religious devotion. Well, what the Koya pilgrim is expected to believe is really asking rather too much of him. The Shingon sect, to whom this monastery belongs, practises more magic than any other, and the Japanese of to-day regard these practices very sceptically. Even the priests do not seem to think too highly

of their cult. They prefer to talk about Fichte and Kant, and they evade my questions relating to dogma and cult with a gentle smile. But all, priests as well as congregation, join in the religious performances; not one of them wants to be a spoil-sport. They all have too much feeling for form not to carry out all ritual with artistic seriousness. Their seriousness is really that of the comedian, who has entered into his part wholeheartedly. This morning I missed the early Mass in the temple where I am staying. As I expressed my regret to the abbot at this fact, he declared himself at once ready to celebrate it once more for me, because the very ancient ritual, which had probably come via India from Egypt, would certainly interest me. This was done, of course, from politeness, and I am heartily obliged to him, all the more so as this service was actually one of the most remarkable which I have ever attended. Nevertheless, I doubt whether a priest who is really in earnest would go so far for the sake of courtesy.

It is quite correct; the Japanese mind lacks religious profundity in the Indian sense. Nowhere do I feel anything of the inner experience which transfigures the faces of the pilgrims in Benares or Rameshvaram; and the conversations which I have had with the priests concerning Mahayana doctrine did not teach me anything whatever. And yet, Buddhism in Japan seems to have a much more vital significance than one is led to believe from the first casual impressions. The Japanese are not religious in the Indian sense, nor in the Christian, for they are wanting in profundity of recognition and imaginative powers; when they do not think, they believe, as the simple people do everywhere, in certain miraculous facts and circumstances; and when they have learned to think, they begin to doubt. But the processes of thought are nothing essential to the Japanese: what is most essential, most profound in him, appears in his sensibility. I say in his sensibility, not in his feeling, his soul, his heart; it is in the manner in which the surface, not the depths, of his psyche answers to the impressions of the internal and external worlds. The inner life of the Japanese takes place on the whole in the domain of sensibility, just as in the case of children and young women.

Here, too, his religiosity is expressed. The faith of a child is no profound faith, and yet it leads directly to God. His kind of faith, however, is the most lovable of all. Thus, the Japanese religiosity, which, seen from the angle of the spirit, appears shallow, has created realities in the domain of sensibility and in the realm of moods which belong to the most priceless treasures of the human race. There is nothing more fragrant than the religious lyricism of the country of the Rising Sun, nothing more sweet than the conceptions of love which are symbolised by Amida and Kwannon, nothing more ingeniously delicate than the concept which the Japanese Buddhists associate with life after death. The missionaries who understand Christianity most profoundly, and who have at the same time penetrated most deeply into the higher forms of Buddhism, are, therefore, unanimous in their conviction that, if our ideas of divine grace and love are the more profound in themselves, the Japanese ideas and presentations of the same qualities are the more beautiful. The process of concretion takes place in the realm of sensibility; in this sphere the Japanese stands, perhaps, higher than all other men. No wonder, therefore, that in the individual instance, in spite of his essential superficiality, he excels every one in the power of religious sensibility. This is true, above all, of the Japanese woman: I can never see enough of these delightful children, who bow, full of reverence, before the golden tablets. They know nothing of faith in the Indian sense; they probably do not even know whether they believe; they laugh where they should be serious. And yet, they are unmistakably animated by that very love whose ideal is embodied by Avalokitecvara. I would almost declare that they all feel, as in India perhaps only a Krishna does, or as only a St. Francis of Assisi has felt among us; and in their existence, which is so ready to sacrifice itself, in their relation to those which are nearest to them, they practise daily what it is beyond their power to understand.

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THE same pilgrims who displayed so little feeling of solemnity when visiting the Buddhistic sanctuaries now seem to be

deeply moved when an expert guide leads them through the cemetery. It is the most impressive cemetery which I have seen; no country of Europe possesses a similar monument of patriotic piety. We are following along an avenue of gigantic cryptomeria, which leads for a good mile over the summit of Koya; at each stone monument erected to an individual or to a family, our guide stops and calls out the name. And there is no one who is not connected for ever with the history of Japan, and not one of her great sons is missing. The famous Daimyo clans have here their sign in stone; here rest the great military leaders and the great statesmen. Not all of them are actually buried on the Koya, but they all have their tombstones on it, and it therefore seems as if the whole of Japan slumbers here. . . . I look at the pilgrims who recently laughed and chatted so light-heartedly. Now they seem as if transformed. Their innermost depths have been stirred. The dainty surface is transfused by profound seriousness.

Here for the first time I have come in contact with the soul of Japan. It does not appear in the relation of the individual to God, nor in the faith in transcendental reality, not in the latter's realisation in thought or life: it expresses itself in the relation of the Japanese to Japan. Patriotism is the profoundest factor in the Japanese. His relation to his country, its greatness, the continuance of its glorious existence, means to him what the relation to Brahma means to the Indian, what membership of the universal order means to the Chinese. It is not easy for us to enter into this quality of profundity; it is not profound to us any more. But every one has known moments during which feelings from a far-off hoary past have rushed irrepressibly from a dark source into his consciousness, in which blood relationship and national solidarity seemed profounder ties to him than his relation to God or the universe. In those moments he was related to the Japanese.

The man who attempts to visualise the soul of the Japanese from the experience of such conditions will not regard it any longer as superficial; he will recognise that the greatest profundity and extremity emanate from it. Only it speaks a language which is strange to us. We cannot revere anything con-

crete as the profoundest significance. For us, loyalty can never be a last instance, we can understand the metaphysical unity of country, people, state, nation, family and ruling house, which is still the living fundamental presupposition of every not too Westernised Japanese, only with our intellect, and not even the most patriotic modern European has experienced, in times of peace, the feeling of absolute moral obligation towards his country as such. The feeling which speaks out of the verses of Take Hirose, the hero of Port Arthur:

> 'As infinite as the dome of heaven above us
> Is the debt we owe our Emperor;
> Immeasurable as the deep sea below us
> Is the debt we owe our country.
> The time has come for us to pay our debts.'

This is a feeling which he will only appreciate when the danger of war has temporarily changed his mode of consciousness, when the monad has been transformed into a cell in the national body, when, for the time being, he has ceased to exist as an autonomous individuality. For him the individual soul is the ultimate earthly garment of metaphysical reality. All ideal demands are related to it, and in comparison with it even the mother-country seems to be something superficial. It is superficial, judged by the standard of the cognisant spirit, but this does not necessarily imply that men who feel like the Japanese are themselves superficial: their love of country means an extreme of profundity. Every expression of life is profound which is rooted in the principle of life. For this reason only such thoughts are deep which go back objectively to the basis of things—that is to say, really deep thoughts in the ordinary meaning of the word; but in the spheres of volition and feeling, profundity is independent of objective depth; there it depends on the degree to which subjective appearance mirrors subjective being. Now the subjectivity of the Japanese is defined by the ideas and feelings described above; for him there is nothing beyond them. Consequently, they are profound in relation to him. An essentially superficial people

would neither have vanquished the gigantic Empire of Russia, nor would it, above all, have had the tenacity and courage of sacrifice which was required in order to reorganise itself completely in a span of thirty years.

The profoundest qualities of the Japanese are expressed in patriotism. This profundity, seen from the angle of the mind, is no doubt superficial, and in so far the general judgment concerning him, namely that he lacks depth, is justified. Everywhere where appearance cannot be traced back to its living background, to Japan, his understanding and his ability fail. The Japanese is not deep nor can he be, either religiously, in the sense of the Indians, or philosophically, in the sense of the Germans, or more generally in any speculative sense. But here, if anywhere, the truth becomes obvious that every appearance within its limits can give expression to Atman. The perfection of the rose means the same before God as that of Buddha; the former is nearer to God than the latter before he had become perfect. Thus, the perfect patriotism of the Japanese is worth more metaphysically than the higher insight of the Westerner, which stops short half-way. And further, the perfection of the rose is something absolute: no man will ever attain to it; in the sense of the rose, man stands below her. Thus, the individualised and profoundly thinking peoples, where the exceptional condition of national war does not develop them retrogressively, are inferior as patriots to the Japanese. The Indians whom I mean are altogether unpatriotic, as their consciousness regards manifestation as far beneath them, the Chinese likewise, because their ideal of China is too high to be touched by the accidents of history; we white men, however, once closely related to the Japanese, will become progressively less patriotic in their sense (in spite of the appearance to the contrary, caused by the automatic activity of the conscious spirit which evokes corresponding emotion by the means of nationalistic theory and also by the solidarity of all interests in the modern state), because a man's native country can no more imply an extreme to the completely individualised than to the most profound man, because individualism necessarily produces world-citizenship. That is an advance from

the point of view of recognition. At the same time it weakens physiological cohesion. The Japan of yesterday is closer than our future to the ideal national condition.

I am studying the faces of a few officers who are accompanying me through the cemetery; they are unmistakable Samurais. An outlook on life shines in their eyes which is shared in Europe only by posthumous sons of past centuries. I enquired about a particularly magnificent monument which has only been erected recently. It was put up to the memory of those who fell in the Manchurian War, Russians as well as Japanese. It is the noblest quality of knighthood to honour the enemy.

48

NARA

Now I delight in religious art. According to my feelings, Buddhism has produced the highest of this kind upon earth, and many of its most glorious monuments are to be found in Japan, in and about Nara and Kyoto. How unspiritual do the highest manifestations of Christian imagination appear by the side of those pictures in which Amida, embodying the idea of light, itself transfigures earthly darkness, rising like the sun over the mountains, or by the side of those contemplative and beneficent Buddhas in which the peace of the soul has perhaps received its final expression! In depth of feeling the simple artists of our earthly Middle Ages were probably not the inferiors of the Buddhists, but their feeling was broken against their reason. They were educated to regard the manifestations of their faith either literally—as historical or even scientific facts which, as such, signified something ultimate—or else to interpret them allegorically, and both these attitudes rendered directness impossible. In rare cases their religious feeling has nevertheless expressed itself directly in the execution of Biblical designs and their effect is then all the more moving; the majority of their works are only indirect expressions. The Buddhists, like all descendants of the Indian spirit, never regarded dogmas and myths as more than means

of expression; they never treated them as substances. For this reason, Buddhistic artists could succeed in what was denied to Christians.

Probably all the fundamental conceptions of Far-Eastern religious art are of Indian or Greco-Indian origin, and that which has been preserved in Borobodur and Angkor Vat proves by itself that the Hindus once upon a time were also great as sculptors. Still, the greatest embodiments of their artistic volition which have been preserved to us are not their work. The most important religious art of the East was created by Chinese masters, and their ideas have found their most fruitful soil not in China but in Japan. It is a sign of profound misunderstanding to point again and again to the fact that Japanese art is not indigenous: no art was ever absolutely indigenous; Greek as well as Indian and Chinese sculpture was dependent upon foreign countries in so far as their highest development only began after external stimulus had fertilised the native genius. It is true that Japanese religious art has remained dependent upon its examples to the very end, that it has never rivalled them and has developed nothing new from the old; to this extent one cannot compare it fairly with Chinese art. But it is nevertheless thoroughly genuine, a true expression of inwardness; in fact the latter is true in a wider sense than in China. It is not necessary to have invented the form of expression which is most appropriate to one; one does not need to alter what is inherited, so that it corresponds with one's own personality. Almost the whole East turns to quotations when it wishes to give expression to a direct personal experience, and this does not mean in their case, as among us, either impotence or lack of taste: it means that the soul recognises herself again and again in certain eternal manifestations, just as Nature continually renews herself in identical forms, with undiminished originality. The world of forms of Buddhist art corresponds to the Japanese Buddhist religiosity as completely as it probably only corresponded in exceptional souls in China, which was already thoroughly Confucianised—no matter whether this correspondence existed previously, or whether it was, conversely, created *a posteriori* through the

influence of Buddhism upon the Japanese soul—it represents a true image of spiritual life in Japan. It is a Japanese and not a Chinese mood of the soul which speaks from the sweet Kwannon pictures, the discreet and yet rich chromatics of the Mandaras is the reflection of Japanese, not of Chinese, inwardness. One might say that if all forms and colours down to the very last had been invented on the Continent and if there had been no Japanese who adopted them, then the last possible connection between art and life would have remained unrelated. In Japan, Buddhist art had become the normal expression of religious feeling; for one Fra Angelico in Tuscany, there were hundreds here. Many saints and fathers of the Church were simultaneously painters and sculptors; the majority of the statues and pictures which are shown in the old temples have been created by priests and monks.

It will be objected here: but the Japanese are not spiritual; how should the most spiritual of all the arts be appropriate to them? Hereupon one must reply at first cautiously that, if the modern Japanese are rarely spiritual, this does not prove that this was always the case. The concept of a people, of a race, corresponds to a definite idea always only within definite limits of time. The Jews of to-day would not create a Bible, the American business men of the twentieth century do not let us guess that their ancestors escaped across the ocean from religious motives in order to found a kingdom of saints upon earth. Pure blood may be considered as a constant factor in such an equation, but the variable factors also have their say, and, not infrequently, they decide. The variable quality of Christianisation has, in the course of centuries, in spite of all the existing constant factors, unified the most diverse races of the West psychically to such a degree that a non-European can hardly distinguish one from the other. Buddhism has achieved something similar. The latter has, in accordance with its softer nature, not influenced external life nearly so powerfully. On the other hand, its greater spirituality has led to results which Christianity has never achieved to the same degree: it has spiritualised peoples who by nature were not

spiritual, or it has at any rate done so in some of its expressions. The anti-metaphysical Chinese have risen as Buddhistic artists to heights of metaphysical knowledge which no other people has attained to; and the Japanese, whose mental constant factor as a race has probably always been matter-of-factness, have been illuminated through the light of Mahayana for centuries to such an extent that precisely their matter-of-factness has led to spiritual achievements. After all, religious experience is something as purely empirical as the experience of a child of the world; only it takes place in a different sphere, the entrance to which is, however, open to every one. One ray of light from the jewel on the brow of Buddha pointed out this entrance to the Japanese. As long as they were illuminated by it, they were able to behold and to achieve divinity.

To-day, in face of the glories of Nara, I have at last seen the problem clearly which has occupied me since Koya: how is it possible that the Japanese, who 'know not what they do,' may be regarded in many ways as perfecting the ideal of the Indian sages: it is directly connected with the fact that the omniscient Indians have hardly ever expressed themselves in a manner which did them justice, and something similar is true of the Germans; that so far, the most permanent manifestations of the European spirit do not emanate from the more profound Teutons but from the Latin peoples; and this means that the supreme expression of spirituality is never found by spiritually but by materialistically minded people.

(I am here using the concept 'materialistic,' of course, in a far wider sense than is customary; as a general description for every mental tendency which lies in the direction of appearance as such.)

The control of matter requires organs which are a perfect match for it, in particular fully developed senses; the mind as such is not sufficient. As one and the same man is never equipped equally perfectly with mind and with senses—there is, rather, an antinomic relation between these two traits—the materialistic individual is most successful in the world of appearances. Now the expression even of spiritual significance

belongs in all circumstances to the sphere of phenomena; the best expression is found, not by the man most transfused with spirit, but by him who knows best how to materialise spirit. And such a man is a materialist. He never recognises the spiritual quality as such by himself, but if it is pointed out to him he grasps it then: and for this reason, the best expressions of spiritual truths have emanated from poets, not from saints and philosophers. The spirit, however, is present in each individual; every one knows the spirit, whether he is aware of it or not. This explains why materialistic people, to whom no spiritual truth would ever have been revealed, have understood and appreciated its expressions, as soon as they became familiar with them. The Higher Buddhism met with immediate comprehension in China and Japan and received there, not long afterwards, its sublimest forms of expression, because the people of the Far East have an incomparable capacity for expression at their disposal, and because those fundamental ideas which they would never have conceived themselves existed already. The materialistic temperament of the Chinese and the Japanese, therefore, does not provide a riddle in relation to their religious art, but, on the contrary, makes it intelligible. As far as Japan in particular is concerned, it bears to China the typical relation of the disciple who completes the work of his master. The pioneer tediously breaks his way through material; he rarely lives long enough to express himself completely, and he rarely cares about final expression. A disciple beginning where his master had to stop carries out what he has outlined and if he has a subtle mind, with an understanding for the peculiar function of form, possessing in addition taste and feeling for shades and high lights, then it falls to his lot to carry the conception of his master, which, as such, is far beyond his powers, to its supreme perfection. That is what the best of the religious artists of Japan have achieved in the domain of the Buddhist world of forms; this world owes to them its charm, its sweetness, its Franciscan fervour. The Japanese have never been deeply religious like the Indians; but they were fervently religious, precisely in the Franciscan sense. The Holy Ghost never revealed Himself as

such to them, but He has transfigured their sensibility. And by means of this transfigured sensibility He has created works of art which resemble Him as nothing else does upon earth.

✦

THE impression of the catholicity of the spirit of the first century after Christ impresses itself upon me once more in face of the art treasures of Nara. What a magnificent synthesis which included Indian wisdom, Greek forms, Alexandrian doctrines and Christian dogma! In the Temple of Horiuji there reigns a Korean Buddha. His specifically Far Eastern appearance yet condenses within itself all significance which has ever been perceived between the Indus and the Nile. . . . And at the same time, there is no question of eclecticism. That marvellous impulse to love, which in the West transmuted the Stoic into a Christian, the proud into the humble, which in the heart of Judaism, which only knew of justice, created the sublimest religion of divine grace, which transformed the self-sufficient ascetic of early Buddhism into the Bodhisattva who made the vow not to enter into Nirvana as long as one human soul languished unsaved in earthly fetters—this impulse has really fused into one what appeared to be capable of union in theory only. But if I now compare in my mind both the final products of this process—Christianity in the West and Japanese Buddhism in the Far East—then I must bow once more before the greater profundity of recognition, as well as the higher artistic capacity of expression of the Orient. How much more true is the doctrine of Mahayana than the equivalent doctrine of Christianity! Whereas in our case narrow-minded Africans and unphilosophical Romans, or at best verbose Greeks, developed our doctrines, this was done in the East by wise Indians; and whereas among us literal acceptance and allegorical interpretation of Christian mythology bowdlerised its form into a kind of hieroglyphic description which was incapable of expressing what was intended directly, the artistic delicacy of the East created, from almost identical manifestations, a language which revealed the eternal quality of appearance with unrivalled directness. Amida is

nothing else but our Saviour, Kwannon does not differ in idea from the Virgin Mary, who incarnates the feminine aspect of divine love; Sukhavati is identical with our heaven. But whereas these myths of Christianity have remained scientific facts up to the present day, or, even worse, have been understood as allegories, the East has never regarded them as anything but symbolical. In India this process was philosophically conscious, in China half-conscious, half-instinctive, in Japan it took its course probably quite unconsciously, with the child-like naïveté of the genuine artist. Again and again I come back to the word of the crucified Saviour: 'They know not what they do.' The Japanese are undoubtedly quite innocent of the marvel of their religious art; all the more innocent as they really imitated the art of others in the main. But their 'copies' are more spiritual than our originals.

As far as spirituality is concerned, Indian wisdom is and remains the maximum, and its most perfect means of expression is the artistic feeling of the Chinese and the Japanese. Of how little avail is the gift of intellect here! I think back to my experiences in Adyar, and the teachings of modern theosophy. They are almost identical with those of Mahayana, and the theosophists are probably a better match than the Japanese for their intellectual content. None the less, Japanese Buddhism towers high above modern theosophy. Theosophy does not treat the Indian doctrine more wisely than our Middle Ages treated the Greco-Christian teaching: it too accepts literally, or interprets allegorically; its synthesis is also an external aggregate. The racial temperament appears, after all, to be insurmountable: Anglo-Saxons remain Anglo-Saxons, a practical but unspiritual race, even where they convert themselves to Mahayana. Let us hope that the Japanese will remain Far Easterners in spite of their tendency to Westernisation.

✦

YES, racial disposition is final wherever the power of faith and imagination are not extraordinarily great. In the case of the Japanese both are exceptionally small, and for this reason blood inheritance has an unusually large significance

for them. It is not true, however often it be asserted, that they, as imitators, are highly changeable; transformation presupposes imagination. They have remained the same through all their changes far more than any other people. No matter to what influence they surrendered themselves—Korean, Chinese or European—it has not altered them in any essential. The history of Japanese Buddhism illustrates this fact with extraordinary clearness.

The monks of Nara were famous as robber knights. The gentle wisdom of India did not have the slightest enervating effect upon these warlike troopers—rather it accommodated itself to their outlook. Buddhism melted almost immediately into the native cult of ancestors and gods, acquired a thorough-going god of war soon afterwards, and it did not take long before the Buddhist monasteries caused the rulers more trouble than the most restive vassals. Indian wisdom, as such, had a direct effect only on that portion and those sides of the Japanese to which it corresponded to begin with: the women and their feeling for art. The Japanese woman is a born Buddhist in her gentle sufferance, her selfless warmth of heart; and as an artist the Japanese is closely related to the Indian. I perceive it ever more clearly: the Buddhist Church in reference to the popular life of the Japanese means, in so far as it is really Buddhist, only an artistic phrase, nothing more. But for this very reason it has meant every now and again something so very personal to the individual, especially to women. The Catholic Church was, above all, a state; it has educated more nations than individuals, it meant to be a refuge rather for humanity than for men. For this reason, the Catholic saints are wanting in the intimate traits which make Buddhist saints appear so lovable. There is only one among them who seems comparable with them: St. Francis of Assisi.

The wistaria is in blossom at the moment. These delicious clinging plants wind themselves to the tops of the defiant fir-trees in the parks. In this way the rough and the sweet elements of Japan have always been marvellously complementary. Love for women, battle for men; Buddhism for her, Shinto for him. But Bushido for both, the spirit of proud, aspiring

purity: of the possible formulas which reconcile contradictions into unity, this does not seem to me to be the worst.

✦

I HAVE several times touched upon the Franciscan character of that which is profoundest and best in Japanese-Buddhist religiosity; I must tarry a little longer on this point of convergence of the East and the West. There is no doubt that the qualities of sweetness, loveliness and delicacy are fundamentally the same, both here and there; it has certainly attained the higher degree of development in the Far East. But Franciscanism is not exhausted in sweetness. I am reminded of a remark of Alfred Weber: The corresponding expression of the spirit which was once embodied in the Franciscan Order is today the Salvation Army. This is probably true. The whole of the spirit of St. Francis does not express itself in sweetness and fervour. In the East the counterpart is missing for the other quality, the quality of passionate action.

Missionaries, of course, will say that this difference is due to the superiority of Christian teaching, and this much is certain: very similar fundamental ideas have evinced incomparably greater power in their Christian manifestations. But whence does this greater power come from ultimately? What is the reason that the Franciscan spirit has produced only sweetness in Japan, and in Europe sweetness as well as strength? It is hardly due to the teaching of Christ in itself, but to the temperament of those of whom it took possession; Mahayana doctrine would probably have had similar effects among us. I am trying to visualise the soul of St. Francis: love has never burned with such intensity in the heart of any Japanese; no saint of the whole East, if I exclude Islam, has ever felt such passion. What differentiates the Christian Bhakta from the Asiatic ultimately, is the fact that it has at its disposal a much larger quantity of energy. Thus, the advantages of Christianity over Buddhism, in so far as they are in question, depend to a large extent on physiological circumstances; they depend on the more dense, more graceful material by means of which its spirit was able to express itself. I have never met a man

among the Asiatics whose psychic body was so full and so rich as is the case with the superior average individual among us; all of them, so far as I can judge, are psychically meagre compared with us.

From this point of view, it seems to me that very interesting vistas of our supposed materialism and the supposed spirituality of the East open before us. The facts are, of course, what they are, but their import is not quite the one which is usually ascribed to them. Spirituality appears generally more spiritual in the East than in the West, but it does not follow necessarily that the former is really nearer to the spirit: it need only follow that its body is more meagre. This interpretation is undoubtedly correct in many cases, and it applies presumably throughout in the case of Japan. A great deal of what seems admirable in India may find its true cause here: it is not difficult to renounce, if one's passions are feeble. This much is certain: the richer the body, the better are the means of expression of the spirit. This is proved by Beethoven, by Bach; nothing Eastern rivals them. China proves this most impressively of all. Wherever it seems possible to compare Chinese with Japanese manifestations on the one hand, and with Indian on the other, that is to say wherever either an identical spirit lies at the bottom of cultural appearance, or where identical means of expression are employed, one is impressed by the greater substantiality of the Chinese manifestations. It seems not only more robust, more materially significant, not only more clearly defined, more powerfully executed, it seems to be animated from a greater depth. In order to bring profundity to the surface, physical force is required; and the more surface is led back to its living basis, or is illuminated by it, the more clearly it appears. The Chinese are the most substantial of the Asiatics; they are the only people whom I know whose psychic bodies can stand the comparison with our own. For this reason, Oriental spirituality has found its strongest earthly expression in China.

49

KYOTO

I AM still deeply affected by the tragedy which has been played on the boards before me. It was a famous historical drama, conducted and performed in a masterly manner and moving for this reason alone; but what overpowered me was the pathos of the mood, spread over the whole performance by the alternation at rhythmic intervals of the chanting of old folk tunes as the accompaniment to dumb mime, with the real action. I experience nothing short of a perfect evocation of the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages are not very far in the past in Japan. Their peculiar condition of consciousness and their forms of expression are familiar to the aged from personal experience, so that it is easier in Japan to evoke their spirit than in Europe. Moreover, their character was far more crass in general, their manifestations were correspondingly stronger. I do not believe that the virtues of the Samurai spring from such profound roots as those of the Frankish Knight; the loyalty of the vassal, feeling for honour and contempt of death, probably meant more to him. But, thanks to the peculiar Japanese temperament, according to which presentation and being signify almost the same thing, for whom stylised exaggeration is natural, they appear more picturesque in his case, for which reason they excel our own in scenic and artistic value in general. The gist of the drama which I witnessed is roughly as follows: the feudal lord has entrusted a vassal clan with a valuable scroll of writing. The member of this clan who looks after it, shows more inclination to a lady of the court than it pleases his proud wife to behold. She determines to ruin her rival. For this purpose she removes the scroll, so that the representative of the feudal lord, who soon after appears to demand it back, finds the chest empty. Some one must have stolen the treasure. The mistress of the castle accuses the hated lady of this deed, and thereupon chastises her—the greatest disgrace which can overtake a lady of birth—with her slipper in front of the

assembled court. As a result of this humiliation, the falsely accused woman commits suicide. Her faithful servant, however, avenges her death by beating the moral murderess with the same sandal, and then slays her in a knightly duel. The fable is simple enough and of small significance according to our ideas; for us, the tragic motives, moreover, do not seem to lie in the depths of human nature, but appear to be based in superficial conventions. But for these people, convention *was* nature. And any one who has personally experienced, under the influence of a perfect theatrical representation, the atmosphere of the Japanese Middle Ages, will perceive, in what is apparently artificial, the purely human element in a shape as moving and naked as in a Greek tragedy of fate. Even 'fate' was, after all, a convention—we no longer believe in its power; even the passions which have since been used as motives are not necessarily compelling forces—for man can stand above them; it depends solely on where he actually does stand. If he identifies himself really and perfectly with a foolish prejudice, then this acquires the profundity of nature. Now the intensity of experience was so great in the case of mediæval man that his prejudices imply more pathos than metaphysical tragedies do among modern people.

A feeling which 'resembles sorrow' steals over me. It is explicable enough: no matter how much I may be an intellectual, I feel nevertheless the fundamental instincts of the knight very vitally in me, and they no longer fit into this age. The days of the nobleman are numbered. What folly to see in this fact a sign of unqualified progress! The typical traits of the nobleman do, of course, not imply absolute values, but absolute values are innate in no manifestation; all are only definite forms of life, as such not essentially necessary, conditioned, limited, subject to change, and easily recognisable, especially in men, as accidental, because the barriers are psychical which separate one type from another here: one-sidednesses, peculiarities, prejudices. The knightly concept of honour is, no doubt, theoretically a prejudice, but the same applies to the professional honour of the merchant, and particularly to that which the freethinker proudly calls his lack of

bias. The question is, which prejudices are the better ones? In principle it may perhaps be foolish to ask: to be a stag is prejudice from the point of view of the horse, and vice versa. All manifestations are an expression of inward necessity within the limits of external possibility, they are complementary to each other [1] and change more or less correlatively. But there are nevertheless better and worse prejudices in the sense that not every constellation permits the realisation of equal values, and some are lost altogether if a particular form of life dies out. In this sense the nobleman towers high above the types which irresistibly take his place to-day; no one is his equal in moral courage, idealism, self-denial, loyalty, nobility of outlook and disregard of material advantages. Thus, humanity suffers an irremediable loss through the extinction of the knightly spirit.

It is true that a type is beginning to crystallise which, similar in spirit to that of the knight, is superior to it in so far as it is defined by less particularised prejudices and gives greater play to individual temperament: it is the type of the intellectualised and universalised English gentleman. But it is much more difficult to compass this type than the other, and for this reason it remains questionable if it will ever prevail. It requires an enormous innate culture, which even the bearers of the greatest names do not possess in our days of extravagant intermarriage, and it presupposes a capacity of conscious self-limitation which is directly opposed to the ideal of the emancipated average, in order to be a nobleman in this highest sense. At present very few are ripe for freedom, by far the majority are still men of the herd, and incapable of perfecting themselves beyond the limits of the community. Thus, where the old connections have been destroyed, they enter into new ones, which are justified much more superficially than those which have matured in the process of history. To-day the rich join hands: it was better when the noble-minded did so. I am becoming bitter. How should I not be, since I have

[1] See as to the ultimate reason for the correlation of all living beings my lecture 'Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung' in the *Leuchter*, 1924 (Otto Reichl Verlag).

to look on while the trend of events irresistibly drags down the type which ought to be the most noble? There are appallingly few genuine aristocrats already among the bearers of the greatest historical names. It is in the nature of things that an organ which cannot act in accordance with its nature becomes degenerate. This takes place in two ways, the emphasis may be laid on the word 'accordance' or on the word 'act': the rigid reactionaries degenerate because they do not exert themselves at all; the progressives do the same because they, where they can no longer live in accordance with their peculiarity, try their fortunes in different ways for which they lack direction because their inherited instincts fail. To-day most of the landed nobility have to live as merchants. As they are not merchants by nature, and can only be guided by considerations of utility, not by intuitive feeling in this profession, they lie, in the metaphysical sense, when they do business, which is expressed in appearance by the fact that they are often less gentlemanly in their dealings as men of business than professional tradesmen. All that lies in their blood is knightly honour, the specific morality of the tradesman is something strange to them; and they therefore belong, in their new career, only too often to a lower class than the representatives of old merchant families. The types of humanity are not interchangeable, and can only be transformed to a small degree. In this way, Japan offers the most instructive of all examples. In this country, modernity immediately followed upon the Middle Ages, the era of the economic outlook immediately succeeded the era of the Crusaders. What was the result? Among knights, the buyer and seller is always held in contempt, and contempt kills noblemindedness from the outset. Therefore, the Japanese merchants, compared with the Chinese, were typically low-minded. The noblemen have proved their value as knights brilliantly enough in war. That the typically knightly attitude is still vital to-day, I myself have had considerable opportunity to observe; I have often been struck by the similarity between the Japanese and the Baltic noblemen: in both cases there is a Don Quixote-like contempt of money, in both cases there is a magnanimity and a largesse which is hardly

met with any more elsewhere. But to-day most of these Samurais are not in the position materially to continue their existence in the old way; to-day they must, in order not to starve, participate in the economic competition, and here they are not guided by any certain instincts. Thus they rely exclusively on their sense for business, and this is only far-sighted in so far as it works from a solid basis of character; the result is obvious to everybody: I have so far not met with one single white business man in the East who did not regard every Japanese as a low, vulgar and thoroughly unreliable fellow. While the mediæval tragedy was being played upon the boards, the faces of all, even those of the Japanese who wore European dress, appeared to be transfigured; certain strings of their being were vibrating which modern life no longer touches. And these strings are the profounder, the fuller and purer ones—in Japan as everywhere else on earth.

✦

THE character of Kyoto differs from that of all the cities which I have visited so far in Japan: its character is that of a metropolis which summarises all the forms of life in the wide realm into one magnificent unity. I go to visit the sights: the monuments of court culture, of pompous vassal power, of the magnificently lavish sway of the prelates, and the memorials of that austere and manly warrior spirit, which has brought about the final rise of Japan; and I am amazed at the manifoldness of the manifestations in which life expressed itself here once upon a time. What similarity existed between the exquisitely cultured courtiers, with their feminine sensibility, their delicate artistic feelings, and the rough, masculine Samurais? Between the Amazon-like empresses of the old times, the great lady artists of the Middle Ages, to whom Japan owes the best of its literature, and the Spartan-minded spouses of the knights? Every one of these types can be regarded as a special species of humanity, and has always been judged as such. And if I compare the well-articulated organism of ancient Japan with the uniformity of to-day, and think at the same time of the near future, when this process of levelling

will have become perfected, then once more a feeling of bitterness takes hold of me. The misconception that the removal of the social barriers could favour the differentiation of men is really too foolish! Of course it facilitates individual differentiation, but what does this signify in comparison with typical differentiation which it throttles from the beginning? Under the most highly individualised people it happens only exceptionally that an individuality, as such, is valuable; conversely, the types which crystallise in the most impersonal nations are, without exception, the bearers of human values, which are lost when the boundaries between the types become blurred. Man happens to be a differentiating being, there is no blinking the fact; he becomes conscious of his peculiarity only in reference to what differs from him; for this reason, high culture flourishes only in aristocratic communities. The differences between individuals who substitute differences in type in democracies are too small, and, above all, too superficial, to be stimulating to the same degree. The Japanese illustrates these truths as no other people does. They are, as all connoisseurs affirm unanimously, markedly impersonal, they have remarkably little feeling for individuality. They lose in proportion as they depart from the possibility of typical manifestation. The courtier of long ago was refined as opposed to the crude Samurai, and the latter was manly and strong as opposed to the subtle Daimyo; the woman of birth was severe and self-controlled in the consciousness of her superiority towards the children of nature who acted as her servants. To-day the Japanese regard themselves more and more as equals, they strive, above all, to be 'modern people.' And this makes them more banal every day. . . .

But in Kyoto the psychic atmosphere of the old days still prevails, and the spirit of the residency still holds sway. I feel as I sometimes did in Versailles, when I strolled in the light of the October sun, through its semi-wild avenues. I feel as though I were a courtier; etiquette regulates all my impulses; semblance is highest reality to me, and formulas appear essential. And this constitution does not limit me: in fact here this very constitution brings about the greatest possible inner

freedom. In the Versailles of Louis XIV only the perfect courtier could be entirely genuine. In Kyoto it was similar. In its artificial society, supposedly controlled by puppet emperors, ruled in fact by their favourites, contaminated by intrigue, only the servile courtier was quite in his element. But he appeared to be remarkably substantial. Thanks to the peculiar Japanese temperament, which unites in so strange a manner sensitivity, lack of imagination and matter-of-factness, the courtiers could be absolutely genuine. They were as genuine as the penguins, who spend their days in the mutual display of courtesy on the ice-fields around the southern pole.

✦

IN the highest circles of Old Japan, interior decorations and the costumes of women were subject to successive changes in relation with the rotation of the seasons. No interior was ever attuned to summer while it snowed and stormed outside, no grande-dame of Japan would ever have worn a garment suggestive of chrysanthemums at the time that the wistaria blossomed. The idea is the same as the Chinese 'harmony,' only it is expressed here, not profoundly, but superficially, just as the painter seizes and reproduces the significance of things in their 'coloured reflection' (Goethe). The Japanese did not bother much about heaven; he has, instead, thanks to his marvellous feeling for nature, made his earth into a paradise. I can well imagine that a dwarfed tree does not feel itself ill-treated as a tree trimmed in the French manner certainly does: he probably feels grateful to his gardener, as he changes his nature without violence, in such a way that it seems perfectly suited to his surroundings. At any rate, every man of taste to whom the same thing happened would be grateful.

The 'meaning' of this feeling for nature, as Laotse would put it, is the basic tone of all Asiatic philosophy of the world and of life. The Indians have expressed it in their philosophy, religion and music, the Chinese in the whole of their culture, the Japanese, above all, in the shaping of what is visible; in this respect they are thoroughly Asiatic. The whole East regards man as a component part of nature, and behaves accord-

ingly, whereas it is characteristic of us that we deny our membership. There is no doubt that the Eastern point of view is the more profound. An all-embracing religion and philosophy which denies nothing can only originate from the Asiatic attitude to the world, it alone makes a perfect social organisation possible in principle; only the man endowed with the Asiatic's feeling for the world will possess taste in the highest sense. For what else is taste but clear consciousness of proportion? The man whose eyes have been trained in Japan will only rarely want to open them in Europe. How barbaric is our habit of overloading! How seldom does an object stand in the place which correlation appoints to it! How obtrusive our pictures are! And how rarely is a European aware that a room exists for the man, and not vice versa, that he, and not the curtain or the picture, is to be given his best possible setting! Even Japanese architecture achieves in the same way something more valuable than our modern method of building, no matter how insignificant their creations may be in other respects. A Japanese temple is designed in its setting, it cannot in fact be dissociated from it. And as this is done with mastery, and as every building gives the effect of unity with its background, the general view is æsthetically more satisfying than our buildings, which are mostly better in themselves. It is characteristic that the Japanese loses his taste as soon as he assumes European manners and European dress: they are alien to his inner nature, he cannot understand them in their own connection. And it is very significant, in the same way, that the temples are generally very overloaded: they too do not exist for men, but for superlative beings, of whom he does not make clear mental images for himself. Accordingly men visit them only on festive occasions, where the elated atmosphere anyhow demands a more gorgeous frame. To-day I attended the annual feast of the Nishi-Hongwanji temple. There the most extraordinary pomp was displayed. But that is just how, according to the Japanese view, religious festivals ought to be—essentially extraordinary performances—and for such purposes the gorgeously decorated, gold-shimmering and gaily lacquered temples provide a framework of appropriate style.

Japanese gardens, however, are absolutely beautiful, they are *the* perfectly beautiful gardens, an expression of no less classical a spirit than Greek images of gods. Why do the Japanese dwarf their trees? Not from a preference for what is small in itself, but so that the tiniest piece of land shall reveal infinite perspective like a landscape by Millet. Wherever, as in the imperial park of Kyoto, there is space in plenty, the trees in the background have almost been allowed to touch heaven, and their impulses of growth have only been limited in proportion to their distance from the background, so that the same picture of infinite distance is achieved on a large scale which the pauper realises on a small one. And how infinitely more can be accomplished by intelligent penetration into the peculiarities of nature than by their violation! By means of some stones, a few plants and a little trickle of water, the artist conjures beauties into an indifferent space, such as cannot be found in many famous sites. . . . While I rest in these magical gardens during the hot hours of the day, I am reading in the *Jengi Mongagatari*, that mediæval novel which gives such a perfect picture of the life of the princes of Japan: this quality of refinement no court of the West has known; nor, probably, any court of China. What characterises this culture is a relation which was only possible in Japan: between the animal-like intuition for sensuous phenomena and their extreme artistic elaboration. When Prince Jengi enjoyed the mood of a moonlit scene, he did not dream like a Persian poet: he was attentive like a beast of prey lying on the watch, but he felt what he observed simultaneously as an exquisitely sensitive æsthete.

✦

THE charm of this æsthetically most attractive of all countries enmeshes me more and more. Here, the objects of the outer world take possession of me, as otherwise ideas in the realm of thought, and they modulate the mood of my soul until it continues to compose in their key of its own accord.

Is it because in Japan I live altogether through the senses that I feel younger every day? That is probably the reason. We happen to be born into the world for this world, for the exploitation, not for the renunciation of earthly ability, and if

we want to live at too early a stage beyond the realm of the senses we have to do penance. Once life has passed its earthly zenith, it fulfils itself more and more in an existence of a purely mental kind. So long as the curve on earth is still in the ascendant, the senses imperiously demand their right. The processes of nature do not allow themselves to be cut short.

But this is not the only, nor the chief cause which raises the tone of my life so considerably in Japan: it is the unique satisfaction which a life in and with the senses offers one in the land of the Rising Sun. Here, as nowhere else on earth, externals are attuned to internals, nature to man, so that the possible impressions possess from the beginning a harmonious relation to the possible sensations; and here, as nowhere else, this harmonious relation is realised in the best objective rhythm. The number of such rhythms is not unlimited: just as combinations of the elements lead to enduring chemical compounds only in definitely limited numbers, just as the heavenly bodies can only be joined into a system subject to certain relations of weights and of distance from each other, so the maximum of beauty, satisfaction and happiness is also dependent on certain rhythmic relations. In objective art, especially in music, this state of things can easily be shown: the more classical a composition, the more does it appear controlled by those very rhythms which, outside in the expanse of the sky, control the harmony of the spheres. In the case of subjective sensations, however, where objective proof cannot be brought, every one whose organisation is sufficiently delicate will have the same personal experience. I know no one who has really penetrated into the rhythmic gymnastics of Jacques-Dalcroze and has not experienced through and in it an incredible exaltation of life: these gymnastics realise the objective optimum in the rhythm of the play of human gestures. I know no artistically minded person to whom the beauty of a masterpiece does not appear as an objective absolute. And, last but not least, the happiness which two people can give to each other depends, in all cases, upon the degree of their physiological and psychic sympathy, that is to say, it depends on the relation in which the strings of their nature harmonise. Exactly in the same

sense, the relation in which objective culture in Japan stands to human subjectivity is a best possible relationship. Of course, one must have become a Japanese in order to experience this optimum to the full; but in Japan one does become a Japanese; no assimilative mind escapes this transformation.

And if he then notices that the foreign Far Eastern manifestation is beginning to appear, even to him, as an objective optimum, then he will also realise how little this style means as such. It is the relations within the conventions which make him happy; the same relations could also be represented in the Greek language of form. And the fact that in Japan he enjoys what is Japanese most, only proves how very appropriate this special style is to the *ambiente*.

My thoughts wander back to China. No, the perfection which I have in my mind's eye to-day is specifically Japanese, not Chinese, and even if each individually beautiful manifestation was invented in the Middle Kingdom; the routine of this life is based upon consideration; but it is expressed in obedience to objective forms of politeness, irrespectively of what may be going on in the consciousness of others. I was told the story of a Chinese lady who came to call upon a European lady, whom she estranged because, instead of bowing to her, she dropped her curtsy in the opposite direction, turning her back to her hostess in the process: her hostess should, according to etiquette, have been standing on the opposite (on the southern) side of the room; the fact that she did not actually stand there was a matter of indifference to the Chinese lady. In Japan it is just the living consideration which is developed to the extreme; nowhere else on earth does sensibility seem to be so delicately shaded. Thus, Chinese invention bears its finest fruit only here. In Japan the idea of harmony is embodied in the mobility of living appearance; nothing happens, except in harmonious proportion, nothing occupies any but the best rhythmical position. Thus one feels well and happy wherever one turns. After all, most things all the world over depend upon trifles. Only one shade differentiates tactlessness from tact, one shade divides politeness from impertinence. The Japanese has the most developed sense for trifles. Thus,

after what was great had been given him, he was able to achieve results which remained unattainable to a greater being.

The reverse of all this—but I do not want to spoil my mood of happiness. Why should a man or a people possess all advantages? The nations of this earth complement each other. Some play bass, the others treble; a few people strike the basic tones, many others sing the melody. Humanity is an orchestra of many voices; the philosopher listens to the symphony. And if he must travel in space in order to gain the impression of unity, this implies no more serious objection against the order of the world than does the fact that the unity of any single melody is only realised in the passage of time.

✦

I DO not know myself any more: not merely because I spend hours pottering about among antiquaries and curio dealers—I am actually busy buying and thinking about interior decorations. This is quite an unusual state of affairs. Never, as far as I know, have I attached any weight to property, especially to the possession of things which please my eye. It is more in accordance with my personal requirements if that which is beautiful is where I can, but where I need not, see it, in the houses of friends or in public collections; if it is constantly before me, it disturbs me, and all the more so the greater its own merit is. Then I have to consider it, to adjust the style of my life to a work of art; above all, my imagination is not at liberty in such a presence. How am I to unearth thoughts without hindrance from unconscious depths, if the space before me is not empty, if my senses are caught up again and again in something perfect outside myself? It is true that things which are merely pleasing are not so restrictive in their effect; but then, I do not need them. I would, of course, mind it if the ladies I know did not make their surroundings as beautiful as possible, for when I am with them my consciousness is turned to the outer world, and suffers from any of its insufficiencies; from my own surroundings I merely demand that they shall not enter upon my consciousness at all: that should be their perfection. But here, under the influence of Japan,

I am turning into an epicurean, into an amateur of art. Here, everything visible is designed for man; the whole of nature only seems like the frame of human life, every object is there for use, every work of art presupposes an observer. Thus it happens that even a man otherwise independent of the outer world feels oppressed and uncomfortable, if he is capable of impressions at all, so that any discord in Kyoto makes me think involuntarily how I could be æsthetically more in harmony with my surroundings, and I live, in fact, in the belief that I would continue to have such wants at home. I have to laugh at myself. With a little less self-criticism I might almost persuade myself that I am a connoisseur of art. This morning, at the opening of an auction, I watched Japanese experts examining porcelain. I am probably blind to what they notice, but it seemed to me at the moment, quite seriously, as if I too might join in the conversation about porcelain, and it really seems as if I had not judged wrongly on a number of occasions. This I owe entirely to the suggestion of my surroundings; by nature I lack every feeling for the arts and crafts. However, I am well content to have stood in the shoes of a man of taste, for a few moments at any rate, because in the process a new side of the Japanese temperament has become clear to me. Goethe remarks somewhere that the theatre had the double-sided peculiarity of making the audience imagine that they too were able to produce dramatic work. What is the cause of this? Apparently it is due to the fact that men do not give such close attention to most events as they do to the performance of a play; and that which has really been seen lies, regarded from the angle of the mind, on the same plane as that which has been invented. Thus, the spectator thinks involuntarily that he has created the drama of another man, or at any rate, as this is demonstrably not the case, he imagines that he is capable of a similar achievement. In just the same way, even a barbarian in artistic surroundings, at some time or another, arrives at the conclusion that he 'really' is a connoisseur of art, for in these circumstances he notices what otherwise he overlooks. This train of thought has, however, not yet reached its end: the education of attention for the purposes of observing certain things

develops the capacity to see them; in fact, it leads further: continued attention calls forth creative gifts. This then seems to me to be the key to the understanding of the artistic creativeness of Japan. The Japanese are by nature not productive in the same way as the Chinese used to be in their earlier days; but they have eventually become creative because in idea imagination and technique, receptivity and production belong to one single psychic whole. A powerful imagination creates means of expression for itself; where technique is perfect, there spirit and significance become incarnate of their own accord; the perfect observer is ultimately surprised by original ideas. The Japanese possess two qualities by nature: they are incomparably acute observers, and virtuosos in all technical skill. By virtue of these qualities they have not only been able to make their own the achievements of all the peoples whom they wished to emulate—they have succeeded, without really having ideas, in presenting ideas, even ideas which none before them has produced.

✦

TO what an astonishing extent I have already become a Japanese! Their senses have become my own; I apply the standards of their æsthetic as a matter of course, I notice and regard a thousand things which I never noticed otherwise; I seem to have become completely transformed from a thinker into a visual man. And I am amazed at the wealth of the visible world. Until now I had often found that this world conceals rather than reveals; that reality, as seen by the eye, is poor by the side of that of the mind and of the soul. Now, however, I recognise that it is marvellously rich, that it only depends upon the talents of the observer how much it offers and means to him; just as much meaning can be manifested in the play of colours and lines as in the most intelligent structure of thought. But, of course, it is a meaning of a different kind. They say that the gods talk to each other in colours; this may well be; but then they talk of something else than we do. I do not know whether men who live continuously by their eyes are as conscious of this as I am; the visible world is a world by itself;

the experiences of a graphic artist do not possess a concrete common denominator with those of the thinker. Therefore, it means an absolute enrichment of my existence that for the moment I am able to perceive like a Japanese painter.

For the moment—for this attitude will not last long. The possibility of being Japanese is certainly innate in me, just as everything natural is innate in all men; every one may, deliberately or involuntarily, be, at various times, a tiger or a deer, a waterfall, an earthquake or a plant; it simply depends on the elements of his being which he stresses. But in the long run every individual is only capable of existence subject to the attitude which defines him as such; this attitude alone is a reliable means of expression for what is profoundest in him; and for this reason, the entering into something too strange unfortunately seldom proves to be as productive as in theory it ought to be—it does not lead us whither we would. This afternoon, while I sat for hours on a wooded hill, among blossoming azaleas, with the wide expanse of Lake Biwa in front of me, I experienced this once more myself. I assumed the nature of the visual man; I became absorbed in the pure form of plants; before long I was able to see them in the way in which Japanese painters see them, and the meaning of every line was revealed to me. But as I became more deeply concentrated, their visibility disappeared; not absolutely, but in its own independent sense, with which alone art is concerned. I began to realise ever more clearly what is becoming a true reality for me more and more: the possibility of appearance. Once more I was in direct contact with that invisible power which conditions existence and its nature from within, which rules all the processes of growth and decay. And when lightning flashes of reflection darted through my mind, I wondered, as often before, why it is denied to me to have my personal centre in pure possibility, and why I cannot, when I actualise myself, sometimes be the whole, and sometimes nothing, and sometimes any single part of it. And my contemplation was followed, as usual, by sadness. It is tragic for one's knowledge to be in advance of one's ability. Why am I not a god? Only because I am wanting in physical strength; it

is the available quantity of energy, and nothing else, which differentiates the metaphysician from God. If I possessed sufficient power, then my ideas would, of their own accord, become physical manifestations, and, as my thoughts wandered, one world would succeed another. As it is, I am not even able to be a Japanese as long as I wish; the limitations which I do not recognise in idea control me all the same. Every new manifestation ultimately unmasks the old Keyserling again, and this happens generally long before I have exhausted the possibilities of the manifestation in question. What is one to do? If my nature were purely that of an observer, I could at any rate deceive myself concerning the facts, as most mystics have done: I could not act so consistently, abide so continuously in thought in the realm of possibility, that I would lose the consciousness of my limitations, until the course of events really explodes them one day. But unfortunately I am much too active for such a condition to be possible for me. Nothing better is left to me than to educate the invincible Keyserling into so pliable an instrument that I at any rate do not need to waste any attention on his existence while I work.

✦

BEFORE I had seen a Japanese dancing festival I would never have dreamt that rhythms as perfect as those of Byzantine mosaics could be presented by living beings. The lute-players on the right, the drummers on the left, seated in identical attitudes, line the amphitheatre. They carry out identical movements in uniform time, and form together a living frieze of perfect rhythmic unity. And the Geishas, who performed their character dances sometimes on the stage, sometimes along the auditorium, produce the effect of angels in mediæval pictures of paradise, of mere repetitions of an eternally constant symbol. On this occasion I felt more than ever: it is only in rhythmic stylisation that nature becomes completely herself; the richness of life is only fulfilled in the simplifying curve. I felt as though I was being enlarged, as though all inhibitions and barriers were vanishing; it was as though all impulse became resolved in blissful harmony.

The accompanying music did not sound beautiful to European ears, but the performance itself was music. Here I realised, for the first time, that moving colours and lines are able to effect just what reverberations of tones can do. The European ballet is too superficial to cause such effects; the facial play of our musical dancers amounts to copying or interpretation, it is not a direct expression. In principle, that which Jacques-Dalcroze strives for should be able to embody the ideal, only I am afraid it will only do so partially, because our dancers, no matter how they are trained, remain conscious individualities; a European cannot forget that he is a 'personality.' In Japan the ideal is actually realised, because the performers are Geishas; creatures born and trained to produce blissful moods without self-consciousness; to represent an arabesque or an accompaniment selflessly; never to exist for and by themselves. It does not enter into the mind of the man who watches them that they possess individual souls. They are what they are supposed to represent—notes struck upon a string, patches of colour, mosaics; elements without a significance of their own. Blessed are the people who have thus honoured the Geisha! Instead of expelling her contemptuously, or using her only as a means of enjoyment, they have consecrated her as priestess: thus, that which may be the lowest in itself takes part in the creation of the highest. The Geishas have the privilege and the duty of fostering the old traditional forms; thus, they are the guardians of the Holy of Holies. In performing the ceremonies and dances again and again which are the perfect expression of the soul of old Japan, they preserve this soul alive through all time. And only they, the loose, the light-hearted ones, are capable of doing this. None but this type of humanity can be elemental in the manner required by ritual and ceremony, for only this type is, regarded metaphysically, selfless; Geishas alone exist relatively in the literal sense of the word, only they are literally without personality. Therefore they are able to achieve what more autonomous types cannot do: they can represent to perfection what in figurative expression is above personality.

The tea ceremony took place before the performance of the

dance. It was a wonderful experience for me to observe what profound understanding simple folk brought to bear upon the complex ritual. So long as this feeling for form remains alive, Japan will not lose its soul. What is to happen, however, when, even in this way, it follows the example of the West? In Europe even the Pope no longer understands the profound significance of form, not to mention the kings and princes; the British nation alone represents a worthy exception up to the present day. There perfect common sense has led to the same result as artistic instinct has done in other cases: they know that form not only represents content, but actually creates it, and it translates this recognition into practice all the more energetically, the more the content in itself loses in power. To-day, when no one really believes any more in the divine right of kings, their original prestige is expressed all the more powerfully in externals, for the appearance reacts upon the heart. The more the ties between the various parts of the empire actually loosen, the more each part becomes individualised, the more does the government place the symbol in the foreground. Thus, the king, actually only one among other officials, endowed with power far inferior to his ministers, is surrounded, wherever serious matters are at stake, with a semblance of majesty, of which Shah Djehan might be envious.

Such means, of course, are not efficacious any longer everywhere. Englishmen are prepared to let form create in themselves what the Germans, for instance, are not prepared to do. This does not prove that the Germans possess greater freedom, but that Englishmen possess more culture. Wherever the inner side of life is concerned, it is significance which creates the facts; in the significance with which a form is credited, a new and higher sphere of reality is revealed, and this form awakens consciousness even in the souls of those who would never have perceived it by themselves. This truth is still a matter of course to the Japanese: will it remain so? I fear the worst, because they do not understand it; they act in accordance with it without knowing what they do. Once they enquire after the meaning, which is bound to happen sooner or later,

it seems certain that they will give the wrong answer; they will hardly let pass, as positivists, what is not directly intelligible to their reason, and they will realise the meaning of symbolical truth with much greater difficulty than we, who are so much more mystically endowed (the Japanese regards the European in general as remarkably superstitious).

To return once more to the institution of the Geishas (they are really an institution: their mastery in etiquette is patented, and the system has the Imperial sanction): our social reformers are horrified that such institutions still exist; if the Geishas really are not personalities, they think they ought to be educated to become personalities; it is said to be unworthy of a human being to be only an element. Great heavens! Most human beings *are* nothing but elements, and can only attain their perfection as such, especially if they have Geisha natures. I do not want to set up the old Japanese society as ideal, but it is nevertheless true that its principle, in the given empirical circumstances, makes self-realisation possible for the elements in a far higher degree than our society does. And I am not thinking here only of the courtesans, who in Europe, thanks to our disgusting system, appear so much more degraded than they do in Japan: I am thinking of all classes of society. Our ideal is the perfection of the individual; it is perhaps the highest. But it is another question as to which method is best suited to the attainment of this perfection. Most people, even in the West, are not individualised enough to become perfect by following their own impulses (this applies even to the Italy of the Renaissance period). And as the modern spirit of the age no longer favours the striving for the perfection of types, the individuals are becoming more independent, but in the same measure less distinctly marked than they used to be. This is seen most clearly in the case of women. It is, in accordance with her nature, more difficult for her than for a man to find her perfection in and through herself; the greatest women who have lived have grown to be what they were by devotion—to a man, to God, to an ideal. And now even the lowest want to be 'altogether themselves.' These foolish creatures do not understand that they would become

themselves in a far higher degree if they professed the type proudly to which they belong and sought their perfection in it. For this form which has been marked by the wisdom of both history and nature, would help their individualities to a stronger realisation than the personal ideal, which is usually visualised only vaguely, and only rarely pursued with sufficient consistency. On what a far lower level are most modern women than those belonging to a past which is not remote! The highest type of present-day Europe is embodied in the French woman of birth. For she alone is still educated so that she shall represent until representation has become reality.

✦

I HAVE now spent many a night in Japanese inns and tea-houses, and I have awakened many a fresh morning in their low rooms, strewn with mats. Japan at night is full of the most intimate charm. The outward picture of the streets does not bear comparison with the Chinese; they are uniform, dark and quiet, and the eye is attracted only rarely, as in China, by picturesque and popular scenes. The night life of Japan takes place beyond the streets. Here, behind paper walls, still perceptible from the outside like a play of shadows, gay from the hour of twilight until the late morning, night in, night out, the sounds of lutes and the bright laughter of girls reverberates out into the street.

How full of atmosphere were those nights in the country inns, where I rarely succeeded in snatching an hour of uninterrupted sleep, because the troops of pilgrims below and next door never tired of chatting and laughing! How full of atmosphere were those late hours in the town, where I sought relaxation from the efforts of the day in out-of-the-way quarters, listening to the chirruping song of the Geishas, or beholding the artistic mime of gaily painted children! How full of atmosphere just those things are here which lack this quality so much in Europe! It is true that Flaubert asserts: *il manque quelque chose à celui qui ne s'est jamais réveillé dans un lit sans nom, qui n'a pas vu dormir sur son oreiller une tête qu'il ne verra plus;* but he can only have referred to those terrifying

experiences whose zenith is reached in the *danse macabre*, for in the life of European courtesans the charm of loveliness is missing which genuine delight possesses. They are despised, they seem embittered in so far as they are not dull animals by nature; they are too conscious, too full of wariness, to be really cheerful, therefore their mirth seems aggressive; and their love stands, no matter how great their art may be, always in the sign of baseness. In Japan, baseness seems unknown, even to the lowest wench. Here all femininity is bent on charm, and charm is educated in them as an end in itself. And since the women do not see anything dishonouring in selling themselves to a strange man for money, and the man sees nothing shameful in visiting these pleasure houses, an atmosphere of harmless cheerfulness prevails in these establishments, just as, in Europe, among children round the Christmas tree. It is instructive to watch the Europeans who visit a Japanese brothel for the first time. At first their features wear that ugly expression which appears on the face of every man who embarks upon the path of vice; but this expression does not last even on the faces of the coarsest and bluntest. They soon become as harmlessly cheerful as the girls, and they soon lose consciousness of the fact that, according to the ideas of their own country, they are marching along an evil road. Here one can gauge the truth of the saying that nothing makes the pure impure. It is a matter of course to the Japanese that sexual needs are satisfied, they see nothing ugly in the sexual act; the girls who practise the profession of indiscriminate love of their neighbour do not deem it dishonourable to themselves. And as they think and feel this way, there is not only nothing impure or ugly which clings to them—the visitor takes a reflection of their purity from the brothel home with him. How infinitely lower are our typical sensations in these matters compared with that of the Japanese! It is, of course, evil in itself that there are prostitutes and a demand for them. However, this state of affairs will never be abolished altogether; seeing the constitution of human nature, no attempt to suppress sexual intercourse other than that of marriage will succeed, and every evil condition which is removed is replaced by a new one, which

is often worse. Is it not better, then, to meet this evil, as in Japan, by removing its evil character? I am well aware that this too has evil effects, just as everything in life leaves some evil behind it. But as men before marriage will never lead a continent life, and as their polygamous instincts will never become extinct, since women will always be born into the world who can only lead and be happy in the life of the courtesan: is it not more desirable to meet the actual state of affairs by an attitude which does not make it worse than it already is? In Japan there is nothing to prevent a wench from retaining a pure soul; therefore, she need not poison the man who possesses her. In Japan there is a way back to respectable existence from the house of pleasure. In Japan the end of those is not necessarily hopeless whose possibility of existence seems to depend on the freshness of their youth. The courtesan's profession is officially recognised. It is respected in its way like every other profession. Like every other, it is an exclusive whole on the one hand, and, like every other, it is, on the other hand, dependent upon metabolic assimilation. It even has an official duty which endows it with that specific self-consciousness which no profession can dispense with. I have already written of the privilege which the Geishas possess, of keeping alive the soul of Japan by the preservation of the tradition of dancing, acting and playing. More than one brothel seems to have imposed upon itself a similar ideal task, which is honoured correspondingly: in many of these, the highest traditions of style and culture which have been handed down are fostered. One of these houses in Kyoto belongs to the historical monuments. It has stood there for centuries, managed by the original dynasty. The great men of the country used to frequent it, in order to forget their worries in cheerful company, or else in order to hold weighty confidential conferences in secret. Precious mural paintings of famous masters decorate the rooms, each one of which bears a name, like those of the royal castles of England. The most exquisite etiquette predominates among the inmates. Nowhere are the ladies better educated, nowhere do they wear more tasteful garments or speak a choicer language; they preserve the tradi-

tion of the courtly style. And this merit is recognised by the state in so far as they have the right to lead the train during the Imperial New Year's festival.

The Japanese attitude to sexual questions is, within the limits to which my observations are confined to-day, not lower but higher than our own. The existing reality no doubt does not describe the highest possible embodiment of the ideal—far from it—but the ideal as such is a higher one. In significance I do not know a better attitude than the Japanese. And, in fact, our efforts at reform gravitate automatically towards the Japanese ideal, no matter how little our pioneers would like this to be true. 'Immorality' is to be extirpated, the attempt is attended by little success, but in the process something better is attained: the fallen women are regarded with more kindly eyes; everything possible is done to raise the self-consciousness of the courtesan; the hopeless fate which inevitably awaited unmarried mothers in former days awaits them less and less. What else does this mean but that even Christian humanity is beginning to recognise that a natural evil can only be disposed of by removing its nature as far as possible? The fallen girl who is not ashamed of her fall does not need to descend on the ladder of human beings. It is better to create a world in which everything negative is transmuted to positive qualities, rather than to moralise. Every manifestation can mean something positive [1]; it rests with us to bring about such interpretation. The new significance of the old facts thereupon produces new and better facts out of itself. . . .

✦

I PICK up the thread of yesterday's observations. That Chinaman who asserted that the real reason why the European professes the ideal of chastity is their immense brutality compared with the Asiatics was not so wrong after all; the Europeans, he claimed, had to have an ideal which is in direct opposition to their real nature, whereas the gentler, generally vegetarian and therefore less animalic inhabitants of the East

[1] The proof that we are absolutely free fundamentally is the chief content of my book *Schöpferische Erkenntniss,* Darmstadt, 1924 (Otto Reichl Verlag).

could profess a more natural attitude without danger. It is really true: in the East even the abnormal individual is hardly so brutally sensual as the average European; where the spirit of the age does not create artificial barriers, the atmosphere of Europe is sensually provocative to a degree which strikes every one who has been away from it for a time as pathological; it is not too much to assert that the atmosphere at a *bal blanc* in France is more sultry than that in a Japanese brothel. There is nothing in the European woman, from her openwork stockings to the purity and innocence which she displays, which is not calculated, in the subtlest manner, to provoke the desire of the man. Every extra garment which she puts on acts as an additional inducement to strip her of it. And since our social culture, whatever people may say, owes its peculiar character to the part played by women in it, the result is an accentuation of the erotic of the whole of existence. Let no one suppose that this is the consequence of the more liberal attitude to matters of love which is continually gaining more prominence of late: negation and affirmation point psychologically always to the same thing; the prudery of the puritan means exactly the same as the cynicism of the libertine. This is not true to such an extent that, as my Chinese friend remarked quite correctly, our profession of the ideal of chastity is in reality the proof of our boundless sensuality.

His further assertion that we need the ideal of chastity in order to control ourselves at all is of course applicable only partially simply because nothing increases the seductive effect of love more than the presupposition of its sinfulness; yet his thesis contains more truth than one might suppose. Among Frenchmen, in whose case erotic activity meets with the smallest psychic resistance, on the one hand more honesty, and to this extent more purity, predominates than among Englishmen and Germans, and they possess a culture of the sensuous which cannot live where its existence is purposely ignored; on the other hand, the erotic plays such a part among them that one may ask the question whether a little more hypocrisy and barbarism is on the whole not less harmful than an attitude to love which, just because it corresponds exactly to a given nature,

places greater obstacles in the path of its ennoblement. The same applies to a lesser extent to Catholic Germany and Austria. The northern Germanic races are certainly not less sensuous than those previously referred to; and where they seem to be so this is due to a lesser degree of differentiation, not to the weakness of their impulses. But since, thanks to their Protestant inheritance, a consciousness of sin generally plays its part when they love, so that even those least fettered by prejudice only dare in exceptional cases to let themselves go altogether, they behave better on the whole to begin with than corresponds with their nature, and they really become better in the long run because education changes their disposition. Brutality is commuted into tension. To this extent it is undoubtedly true that it is good for us to believe in the sinfulness of cohabitation.

There is no better illustration of the physical and spiritual blindness which characterises most travellers than the view which they have imparted to the West concerning the sensuality and lasciviousness of the Asiatics compared with Christians: the precise opposite is true. No one would accuse animals, which do not know any psychic inhibitions, of sensuousness in the evil sense. In the same way the people of the East are non-sensual compared with us Westerners; and they are less sensual moreover in so far as their instincts are much less brutal than our own. In all probability they copulate relatively more in the East; in the given climatic circumstances this is natural. Among some nations—especially the Chinese and the Indians—the *Ars Amandi* is developed to a high degree, but the facts as such are not decisive: what counts is the significance attributed to them. And the erotic means much less to the Oriental than it does to us. It is a matter of course to him that he has sexual requirements, a matter of course that he satisfies them; and since this is so they hardly occupy his consciousness. Once more: how infinitely less sensuous is the atmosphere of an Eastern brothel than that of a European ball! If among us a woman merely shows her shoe it means more than when a Japanese lady strips herself; the most highly cultured ladies of our great capitals are more aggressive in their intercourse with men than a prostitute would ever dare

to be in the East. And what if I should think of India! With what wonderful wisdom has this people solved the sexual question, how wisely, especially from the point of view of spiritual progress, with which it is concerned so much more seriously than sanctimonious Christianity! There they never attempt to violate nature because they have known for centuries, what Freud has only discovered recently, that repressed desires are more corrupting in their effects than the most evil which are confessed freely. In India monastic tendencies are looked upon askance in every one who does not seem destined to become a Yogi; before he is a grandfather, the normal expression of natural instincts is not repressed but facilitated; all the barriers are lacking which the presupposition of the sinfulness or ugliness of love creates. In their place other barriers are erected by the supposition of love's *sanctity*. Love is regarded as divine in itself so that erotic images in India never belong to pornography but to iconography. Moreover, in every individual case love is specially sanctified. The marital relationship is interwoven with so many religious ideas that its sexual element appears thoroughly spiritualised, and precisely that which in Christendom is regarded as a concession to the sinful flesh becomes a means of spiritual progress. Even intercourse with prostitutes is sanctified where it seems inevitable (which is the case to a far smaller degree in India, where every one marries early). The penitents who have taken the oath of chastity are not always altogether free from the fetters of sensuality. If they suppress these artificially, the danger exists that their imagination, instead of becoming ever purer, becomes ever dirtier, as in the case of St. Anthony. To avoid this, they satisfy their passions, as if they were making a sacrifice, by employing courtesans who surrender themselves, on their part, for the sake of God. The nature of facts is everywhere determined by the significance with which they are credited: thus, no matter how sophisticated this interpretation may be, as long as it is done in good faith, the relapse into Nature's hands does not become fettering to the spirit thirsting for freedom. The outcome of all this is that, in India, with the single exception of the princely courts, an atmosphere of non-

sensuality dominates which alone makes it intelligible why philosophising and religious meditation lead there to such marvellous results. The meaning of all restriction of sexual life is solely that it shall not play a greater part in the whole expenditure of energy than is its due by nature. And an hypertrophy of the sexual factor, which can certainly lead to real poisoning, is prevented more than by all repression, by assuring and justifying the normal expression of this impulse. Among us this happens only in marriage. It will be an eternal source of glory to the East that it has understood how to carry out the same regulation outside wedlock, so that an equally clean atmosphere prevails in brothels as in a well-conducted Western family. For this is actually the case. No matter how many facts people may adduce to prove Oriental immorality—they prove nothing and can prove nothing, because it is the significance on which alone everything depends, and Japanese laxity means about the same as the chastity of frigid Englishwomen.

This beautiful system is not applicable among us. Not because we are better, but because we are too brutal on the one hand, and, on the other, too biased by the ideas of Christian asceticism, and, above all, because we are too matter-of-fact; to us, facts seem more significant than their meaning. But we are, nevertheless, tending in the opposite direction away from prejudice. Just at present the babble of the beauty of love as such, of living a full life, of the right of every woman to the joys of motherhood, is a little exaggerated; but if the traditional barriers are rejected, lock, stock and barrel, as prejudices, this only means the normal stormy phase preparatory to the expert and liberal attitude of the future. There is no doubt that marriage will be regarded less and less as a *conditio sine qua non* for having children; the fact of virginity will be less and less decisive in regard to the honour or dishonour of a girl; women, like men, will be able to follow their personal laws more and more freely. The old forms of social life will not become extinct for this reason, they will continue to exist just as before, in fact they will hardly suffer quantitatively. Only other forms will be regarded as normal too, just as the main

sign of achieved progress in culture is the general fact that man needs to reject ever fewer forms of life in order to regard his particular existence as justified.

✦

THERE can only be one opinion about Japanese women on the part of any one who has a little feeling for style, that is to say, on the part of any man who does not demand the performances of a hippopotamus from a butterfly: the Japanese woman is one of the most perfect, one of the few absolutely accomplished products of this creation. I do not wish to undertake to describe her advantages in detail: this has often been done by a master hand. Here, too, it would be difficult for me to be objective; the atmosphere of Japanese femininity is so sympathetic to me that I have hardly become aware of her disadvantages. It is really too delightful to behold women who are nothing but gracefulness; who pretend nothing but what they are, who do not want to show off anything but what they can really do, whose heart is cultivated to the extreme. At the bottom of their souls there are not too many European girls who want anything more and anything else than their sisters in the Far East—they want to please, they want to be femininely attractive, and everything else, including intellectual interests, is a means to an end for them. How many of those who apparently have only mental aspirations would not breathe a sigh of relief if they could disregard this circuitous means of charm, which it is difficult for them to dispense with in their world, and present themselves as the Japanese women do! But this is just what they would succeed in with difficulty, what those who attempt it fail in. The modern girl is already too conscious to be perfect in a naïve form, too knowing for an existence of pure gracefulness, above all, she is too rich in her nature to be easily perfected at all. In lovableness no modern Western beauty can match herself with a well-educated Japanese lady.

The æsthetic value is surely not the only one which is in question, and it can only be regarded as a highest value where the form implies the fulfilment of all existing content, as in the

case of the best types of Old China. This is not so in the case of the Japanese woman; she cannot be taken seriously as a personality, and to this extent those people are right who place her beneath the European woman. On the other hand, it should be remembered that any perfection is better than none at all. No matter how perfect many European women are, whose type belongs to past ages—I do not know a single one among modern women who signifies more than a hasty sketch of her specific ideal. Therefore, for this age I must give the palm to the lady of Japan.

The Japanese lady whom I have in my mind will also belong to the past ere long, just as the European grande-dame does already. No æsthetically sensitive man will envisage this fate without melancholy. With her, one of the sweetest charms on earth will pass away, and nothing of equal value will replace her soon, no matter how much effort is expended in this direction. The European woman undoubtedly holds a higher position in life than the Japanese; more possibilities are open to her, more traits of her being are developed, and our family life in particular is, in idea, much higher than that of Asia. But what especially the Japanese forget generally is that the advantages of our condition exist chiefly *in abstracto*, and that the value of abstract entities depends entirely on the extent to which they are appropriate to the concrete; the better system does not necessarily produce a better reality. On the contrary, it destroys reality only too easily. The Japanese woman appears perfect as she is or was; where the state of her consciousness corresponds to her condition, she is precisely as happy as the American; she is, moreover, according to her advantages, the direct product of the prevailing circumstances. If these change, the advantages will disappear in the process. Whether, by way of compensation, the Japanese woman will gain what she has lacked hitherto, is all the more questionable, as our women are not yet nearly so advanced that one can say that they deserve thoroughly their new and wide scope.

Every definite condition has a positive effect upon life: this sentence possesses axiomatic validity; positive in the sense that it brings about definite manifestations which no other

condition makes possible. Some of these manifestations are desirable, others undesirable, in the absolute sense none is perfect, because everything definite is simultaneously limited. What, however, must never be overlooked is that the advantages imply something much more positive than any failings. In the negative direction nature does not seem to have a great many possibilities open to her. On the one hand, what is in the descendant is preserved with difficulty and cannot be strengthened by heredity; on the other hand, negative qualities deserve their description also in so far as they bring about degeneration, and for this reason all types converge towards their lowest level; existences which have met with failure or misfortune appear similar everywhere at all times. On the higher regions, however, there seems to be no limit to the possibilities of variety. Just imagine for once the wealth of diverse qualities which in difficult circumstances change has called into existence in men: life which is in the ascendant makes great headway everywhere; in correlation to changing circumstances new forms of beauty blossom again and again, and each beauty was possible only once subject to special circumstances which never occur again. Thus, the perfection of the Japanese woman is the direct product of her position in life, which she has occupied for centuries; whatever may be said against this position—we owe to it the Japanese woman as she is. How miserable is the argument: she deserves a better fate, since she is so charming! One never deserves what robs one of one's beauty. No matter what immeasurable advantages new circumstances may possess *in abstracto*—the feminine type of the past will not continue among them, and Japan will hardly produce a new one equal in value to the old, least of all one which corresponds to the latest European ideal, since the given limits of body and soul are too small. The idea of progress can perhaps be represented in the form of a straight line: real progress, in so far as it is susceptible of proof, takes the form of an agitated and frequently broken curve; it breaks off again and again because every human type is, as a rule, capable of only one kind of perfection.

One word more in connection with the much decried laxity of Japanese women in erotic matters. It seems monstrous to a European that a girl sells her purity in order to fulfil other duties. This must certainly not be understood in the sense that the Japanese woman is the ideal being who sacrifices her highest for the sake of something objectively still higher (although the lack of egoism she has been brought up to is so great that her behaviour often creates the impression of the profoundest metaphysical knowledge; the Geisha often reminds one of a saint to the point of deception). No, purity really means less to her than it does to European women. All the peoples of the East regard concession to natural impulses as a matter of course; if these impulses are curbed, it is done from external motives; they lack our inner inhibitions. But here I ask: is the European ideal of purity really so lofty? Its historical explanation lies in the early Christian ascetic attitude, according to which sexual intercourse is a sin, and this attitude is false; its lasting cause is to be found, as far as I can see, in purely utilitarian considerations: the virginity of girls is, on the one hand, a concession to, on the other, a speculation on, the egoism of the world of men. In and by itself nothing is normally further removed from woman than to idealise virginity: for her, surrender is much rather the ideal, and must be so, since the race-instincts predominate in her consciousness. If virginity really should represent a highest quality, then this trend of thought leads straight away to an apotheosis of selfishness. One may idealise as much as one pleases: woman's fight for her purity *à tout prix* is nothing but self-assertion—and in this connection there is hardly a doubt that the Japanese woman who sells herself to a brothel in order to make it possible for her brother, by her earnings, to fight for his country, is the higher being. The Europeans would take a different view if their sensibilities were more delicate: they only rarely know how to differentiate between purity in the sense of loyalty and purity in the sense of virginity (as a physical fact). In the first sense the Japanese woman is inferior to no European woman: there are no more chaste women than she. And if, in the second sense, her ideas are more lax—

should this not lead us to deduce more certain instinct and more impartial thinking rather than immorality? Do not our best men and women begin to think more and more in the Japanese way? One should compare our ideas of decency with the Japanese view. Our women go to a ball almost nakedly, with the manifest intention of being provocative, but they would die of shame if a stranger surprised them in their bath. The Japanese woman shows herself naked without shame to all the world in her bath, but she would not dream of dressing herself provocatively on a festive occasion: is it not obvious that everything depends on the intention? . . . Which attitude is the profounder, the more pure? . . .

50

ISE

I TARRY near the holiest place of the Shinto cult, at the temple of Amaterasu O-Mikami, the divine woman-ancestor of the imperial house. How much more atmosphere there is in this simple thatched block-house building, which is erected afresh every twenty years, than in the gold-laden Buddha temples! Here the best spirit of Japan has its sanctuary. It is the spirit of simplicity, purity, loyalty, of sacrifice for emperor and country, but also the spirit of boldness, daring and knightly adventure; the spirit of the Japanese as it sees itself in the mirror of its own idealism. Every pilgrim who approaches this sanctuary is overcome by this spirit; it takes possession of him, raises him, enlarges him, lifts him up above his petty ego, now he feels himself to be at one with Japan, the immortal empire. I too am seized by this spirit. From the depths of my consciousness feelings rise up which I hardly know and with which I am yet familiar. They form themselves into a new soul, a soul similar to that of a Greek of early antiquity. Yes, of course, I am only a member in the unending chain of life, of course I am one with all those who came before me; of course, my mind is rooted, not in myself, but in that which is above the individual, in the race from which I spring, which I embody,

and which it is my duty to continue. And if I seek for a symbol of this superindividual reality, which I feel so clearly and yet find so difficult to determine, then I am led back, as a matter of course, to the founder of my line, the distant ancestor to whom all later life owes its existence. It is he who animates all his progeny, it is he who continues to act in me; I owe him, before all others, reverence, love and gratitude. And as I think of him in adoration, the noblest emotions are awakened in my soul. I want to rival him, the great-hearted hero, I want to be worthy of him. He partook of all possible perfection, he was far greater even than I can imagine him. I cannot serve him better than by striving towards the highest, and thus all idealism in me becomes an impulse towards cult. How foolish to smile upon the worship of ancestors as superstitious! Undoubtedly it characterises an early stage, but this worship expresses, where it is genuine and alive, a consciousness of reality such as only the highest religiosity expresses on higher natural levels. It is really true that man is inwardly connected with everything which was before him and will be after him; the primitive man who is near to nature is more conscious of this fact than the late-comer.[1] On a higher plane only woman knows this in whose consciousness the original relations of life continue; she alone still feels herself to be directly at one with her race; her intellect is rarely independent enough to suffocate her natural feeling. And then the heirs of an old tradition are aware of it, the ancient nobles, who for centuries, from father to son, have lived on their estates and become a very part of them, whose mind is consciously rooted in the superindividual: here, feelings of responsibility and pride see to it that the original spirit is preserved. The consciousness of women and of noblemen is not more superficial, it reaches lower down than that of uprooted intellectuals. It is true that their profundity is only one kind of profundity, that of Nature; the consciousness of unity in the man who reveres his ancestors does not reach beyond her, but where the soul is still tied physiologically, no direct consciousness of Atman is possible.

[1] I have developed this trend of thought in my *Unsterblickkeit*, 3rd ed., Darmstadt, 1920.

In the same way, the mental images in which consciousness of reality is embodied are rarely profound: but it cannot be expected of primitive men that their thoughts should be of equal value with their intuition. For this reason the rationalistic observer rarely finds the forms of ancestral cults to his taste, especially those of Japan, whose content of ideas is hardly intelligible. The Japanese is so unfitted for thought, he has so little feeling for the abstract, he experiences so little annoyance at intellectual insufficiency, that it seems to be a hopeless attempt really to comprehend his national cult. This is, judged from the outside, a curious mixture of veneration of ancestors and nature, of magic and of *point d'honneur*, of custom and aspiration for the highest, of crude superstition and primitive sense for reality; if a Japanese explains that the veneration of the Mikado is based upon the fact that his ancestors have ruled over all their ancestors, this is no explanation, hardly a commentary: it is a mere presentation of fact, which will never be understood by the man who does not know something similar from his own experience. Nevertheless, the veneration of the Mikado is an extreme of profundity, it really implies a supreme metaphysical experience. The specific appearance is simply an expression, and one appropriate only to the Japanese, but for them it is adequate as no other expression could be. Lately, a Shinto shrine was unveiled in Tokyo in the bacteriological institute for Robert Koch. It is highly improbable that any of the professors and students, all of whom are presumably agnostics, assumed that Koch had become a god; not many perhaps believed in his continued existence after death. But the erection of a temple and the institution of a cult according to the Shinto ritual seemed to all of them the most appropriate expression of the veneration for the great scientist.

The Government is very wise in encouraging the resuscitation of the Shinto cult to the best of its power: it awakens, like no other, the profoundest reverberations of the Japanese soul, or it leads them, where they exist, to expression. Basil Hall Chamberlain has recently pointed out that Shintoism, as it exists as the state-religion to-day, is a new invention; he shows

that for a thousand years Buddhism was the Japanese religion, and how what is taught to-day as the original faith is an artificial fabrication. The facts have probably been determined correctly, but not their significance! It was only possible to introduce an artificial product in less than fifty years as the inherited faith, because its form was appropriate to the innermost life of the Japanese soul; if an attempt had been made to establish Christianity thus, the attempt would never have succeeded. I too am of the opinion that the special manifestations of cult and faith are the inventions of the priests; somebody must have invented them. But where they succeeded in introducing their inventions, these inventions always gave the best possible expression to a general tendency. Yes, the Government is very wise in supporting and encouraging the Shinto religion by every means; and the Government undoubtedly knows why it does so. Japan is in the not undangerous position of a decidedly unindividualised, impersonal people, which has surrendered itself unconditionally to the influence of a civilisation which is based on the inner assumption of extreme individualisation. Its external side can only do it good; this has already been brilliantly proved by Japan. But if its spirit takes possession of the Japanese at too early a stage, then evil awaits them. They are not yet far enough for everybody to act by his own initiative in the spirit of the whole; their metaphysical knowledge has no other means of expression than that which passes through the physiological feeling for cohesion. If this people loses its primitive group-consciousness, its self-consciousness in the sense of the *cité antique*, then the cohesion is destroyed. All the Japanese in whom the spirit of old Japan (Yamato damashii) does not live any more, are repulsively superficial.

51

MYANOSHITA

FOR the first time since I am in Japan pictures of the Himalayas rise up in my mind. While I am high up in a valley, dreaming in front of a torrent which pours over steep rocks through luxuriant growth down to the level, I have to think of the mountain forests through which I roamed at one time with such delight. Here too the frame which encloses it all is magnificent by itself: the heights round about me are bare and wild, interspersed with steaming, sulphurous springs; the snow-clad peaks of Fuji beckon across the tops of the hills in the foreground; dark pine forests cover the lower slopes. And even there charm is not lacking: the luxuriance of the vegetation again and again creates hidden arbours where nothing robs the fern-clad springs of their idyllic character. Why is it, then, that I nevertheless experience no sensation of grandeur? The fault lies with the cunning little men who have impressed their peculiarity upon this country: their understanding of nature is so inordinately great that they have subjugated their surroundings æsthetically. Just as a single patch of colour can determine and change the meaning of a picture, so the Japanese, by deliberately inserting his particular existence into surrounding nature, has transferred the keynote of the latter so completely into himself that what is great now merely seems to fill out what is small. In the process, grandeur is expelled from the world.

The capacity of the Japanese for recognising, understanding, absorbing and recreating the great in the diminutive, is, of course, seen from the angle of the absolute, something very great indeed. His exquisite feeling for nature means the same as the metaphysical sense of the world in the Indian or among us, therefore only a fool can see a failing in his case in its non-existence. One can even go further: what does the mystic mean when he asserts that his soul enters into infinity? Not that the drop disappears in the ocean, but the reverse, that the sea is absorbed by a drop—and that is what Japanese art

achieves in its sphere and with its particular means. But this consideration does not alter the fact that there is no room for grandeur within the Japanese realm of possibilities; it may be striven for, but it is never attained, simply because that which is small can never be grand in effect. When a nation of ants defends its ant-heap with such contempt of death as may never be found among men, we are full of admiration, but it does not seem great to us; everything depends upon the proportions of the fundamental correlation. In the case of the Chinese, every single thing points back to the Tao; correspondingly, even *chinoiserie* has heaven as a background. In Japan everything remains confined within the frame of human life, and Japan, not the universe, is the highest synthesis. For this reason, the sobbing girl who faces death for the sake of her lover produces a wonderfully vital impression, just as the stern Samurai who commits suicide from motives of an injured sense of honour; all intimate tragedies are within the picture. Heroism on a great scale extends beyond the frame.

The importance of quantity should not be underestimated. Once we descend from the level of the absolute—and we must do that whenever we wish to do justice to single phenomena—then we must admit that there is a difference between totality and singularity, between a chrysanthemum and the world-creating.God. Everything living is indeed god-like; every one participates in his way in the creation of the world, and as his labours are correlated with those of all others, every perfect expression reveals directly the significance of the whole. But the man who creates on a large scale is of a different calibre from the proficient diminutive artist. A God sets millions of vibrations in motion with a single thought, and what the bee does afterwards must first have been made possible by Him. God is very likely incapable in details; He would scarcely be a good miniaturist. He is undoubtedly limited in His way just because He is capable only of everything, and must therefore delegate particulars to lesser people, just as He has always done, and hardly without compelling reason. Greatness undoubtedly is limited by the fact of its greatness, and in the same way as this applies to smallness; nevertheless, the former is

more than the latter. As long as we are entangled in the world of appearances—and who knows if we will ever get beyond it?—so long must we countenance this state of affairs; so long as the mere concept of enlargement is to retain its meaning, so long does quantity retain its objective value. Therefore, grandeur is more than loveliness, no matter how perfect it may be. In the Himalayas nature possesses traits which can only be understood in relation to cosmic assumptions; the whole scenery defies human standards; no matter how luxurious the flora may be, it seems only like a touch of patina on an enormous bronze vessel. There is nothing in Japan that I know of which could not be understood from the human point of view. Nature seems big occasionally even here, but then only the outer frame is great, and the emphasis is laid upon the picture. The single twig of blossom held against the background of empty space—the favourite motif of so many Japanese artists—does indeed awaken in us a feeling of infinity. But it is, nevertheless, the blossoming twig which causes this feeling and gives it colour.

The concepts of our time which relate to this question seem to me to be somewhat chaotic. Conscious of the truth that everything perfect expresses infinity, we have got to the point of overlooking the differences in other dimensions; the blossoming twig is put on the same level with God. This would not be a misfortune in itself: what does it matter what the critics assert? But it may become a tragedy eventually, in so far as it corrupts creative minds. Rainer Maria Rilke, a sensitive, delicate soul, has occasionally, when singing of the falling leaves of autumn, revealed God. But when he speaks of God directly he, so to speak, talks past Him. Rilke belongs to those to whom flowers are the most tangible expression of eternity. He should leave it to minds built on a larger scale to speak directly of the Divine.

52

NIKKO

THERE is grandeur in Japan after all. The scenery of Nikko, with its steep rocks, its foaming waterfalls, its gigantic fir-trees and cryptomeria, is grand; and it produces this effect above all because it supplies a frame for a singularly powerful manifestation of humanity. In the Iyeyasu temple there is a spirit of grandeur such as I have not felt since Pekin.

Iyeyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Dynasty, which controlled the destiny of this country for more than two and a half centuries under the mock-sovereignty of the Mikados, was a mighty man, comparable with the mightiest from every part of the earth. And just as quantitative transposition brings about qualitative change in the whole of nature, so did the Japanese type of ruler experience a radical metamorphosis in him: it was neither the halo of mythology nor courtly prestige, neither the advance of birth nor cleverness, nor a strong arm, which provided the background for this power—it was that genuine superiority of the born ruler which, though containing everything within it, yet towers above it; that intrinsic majesty which distinguishes all very great kings. Iyeyasu has left this spirit as a heritage to his successors; this spirit still rules over Nikko, over the monumental tombs of the Tokugawas and their vassals, creating a psychic atmosphere which exists in no other place in Japan.

It is marvellous that this one man was able to create a type which, compared with every other manifestation of the Japanese spirit, seems to belong to another dimension! And it is marvellous, above all, that this type has continued! I know no more impressive example of how decisive the frame of a picture can be for its character. Different forces are released in man according to his outward position; the principle of life modifies its appearance in accordance with its opportunity for expression. Prestige, might, riches, the faithful admiration by inferiors, are an equal number of formative forces which cultivate and educate the soul, and often bring

about a radical metamorphosis from to-day to to-morrow. This state of affairs is recognised by popular legend in the saying: God gives him intelligence to whom He gives an office. Only this saying overlooks one essential: that it is not every one, no matter how much intelligence he may have, who discharges every office well. The decisive factor is the living spirit which makes use of the intelligence, and this factor is a constant element in every one, capable of increase only in rare exceptions. The spirit in which a man was educated dominates him generally until the end. This is the true meaning of the idea of legitimacy, and also of the distrust of the *homo novus*: for one Iyeyasu, one Acoka, one Napoleon, there are thousands of talented upstarts who were not fit for their new positions. In order to exploit to the full the forces which a ruling position may liberate in every one, this position must be accepted as a matter of course. The consciousness of the ruler must coincide with the normal consciousness. And to believe in oneself to the extent which is required to treat as a matter of course what but lately was inconceivable, is given only to the rare genius. This affords to the man born to a certain position an absolute advantage over the upstart, it gives to an insignificant hereditary king another pull over a distinguished parvenu. In the course of my life I have studied carefully the mentality of the various types of men with whom fate has brought me into relation: ruling princes, statesmen, financial magnates, rising men of talent; in the case of all those who were born to power and not degenerate, I have met with a normal state of consciousness which, though attainable by an ordinary mortal, is never normal to him, and this consciousness implies absolute superiority. This too has, of course, its specific limit; where the frame does not correspond to the picture, as is more and more the case to-day, superiority assumes the aspect of inferiority. But the vocation of the born ruler to rule strikes one nevertheless so forcibly that I have often asked myself in amazement how humanity can be so blind as to wish to give up the breeding of regents, when it breeds racehorses and milch cows. The opposite test leads to the same result; whenever I had an opportunity of watching the rise of an important

man, I could, first of all, always observe inner growth: his own being found more and more means of expression. But as soon as the enlargement of the frame had led beyond a certain critical point, which was nearer or further away according to his calibre, he suddenly became smaller again; the means had become greater than the man. The limit of such stunted growth is the caricature of the parvenu. Iyeyasu had lifted his family to a position which was unique in importance in the whole of Japan. He himself was one of the few upstarts who was predestined, not only to rise, but to live on the heights. He passed on to his heirs the frame he had built for his own life. And this frame evinced so much formative power that the Shoguns possessed for two hundred years a style greater than any Japanese before or after them; and even to-day the spirit of their greatness still hovers over their graves.

53

TOKYO

THE imperial city . . . it is altogether without soul and style, in spite of its magnificent planning, which dates from the Shogun period, and in spite of all the beauty which it contains; Tokyo is a modern city in the most unpleasant meaning of this word.

And Tokyo, just Tokyo, is at the same time the residence of a mythical ruler, a monarch, whose people regard his position as higher than the Chinese regard that of the Son of Heaven; it is the residence of an emperor whose divine right really means Divinity! This co-existence of what is primordial with modernity is most remarkable. The fact that the Mikados have preserved their prestige through centuries, whereas they had almost no power, seeing that they were puppets in the hands of their stewards, and were installed and discarded like junior officials, does not seem surprising if one understands the significance with which the Mikados are invested by the opinion of the people: they belong to a different level of existence from their subjects, and therefore it did not matter much

what happened to them in the human sphere; they were regarded as on a level with the gods, who are broken to pieces when they cause displeasure, but who nevertheless remain higher beings. But that their prestige continues in the old sense when they, like other regents, play a definite part in the body of the state, that is something which is probably unprecedented.

Japan has progressed because a mythical ruler decreed it so. Until recently the court dictated public opinion: the imperial edicts of the most trifling content were read with the devotion which is appropriate to the revelation of heaven; the most distinguished statesmen of the old school did not regard them very differently from the common people. It cannot be denied that this state of affairs was to the benefit of Japan. Wherever individuals do not feel themselves to be emancipated, where they are inclined to imagine higher powers in the shape of personal symbols, where, moreover, the power of faith is sufficient, autocracy is the best form of government. There the ruler literally embodies the will of the nation, there the nation becomes literally conscious of itself in him; there the nation and the autocrat are actually at one inwardly. For there the personality of the autocrat, thanks to the creative faith of his subjects, grows of its own accord beyond the normal human scale. The Indian sages teach that exactly as far as a soul has risen in its struggle to God, He stoops to meet it. This is just what is true in reference to the relation of a ruler and his people: the more they concede to their ruler, the more does he develop towards the ideal of his subjects. The Russian Czars represented, until quite recently, a higher type of mankind than the constitutional monarchs of Western Europe, for they were borne aloft by a powerful faith. In this way, Mutsushito, an average nature at the outset, has proved himself a great man because divinity was expected of him.

Once more I think of the problems of the comparative merits of monarchy and republic, and I see myself induced once again to profess my adherence to the monarchic system. How admirably the overestimation of a superior justifies itself! No matter whether the superior originally deserves the veneration

which is paid to him or not: if he is not actually bad, he does deserve it in the long run; every well-intentioned monarch has, in the course of time, developed into a more important human being than nine-tenths of his subjects. And while they, on the other hand, revere their ruler as a being of a higher kind, they act and become better than they would do in different circumstances. Even mediocre individuals exert themselves to the utmost out of consideration for others, only the most highly cultured individual exerts himself thus out of consideration for himself. In a republic, moreover, every one is sovereign in principle, every one can advance to be the first man of the land; thus, no one feels cause for self-limitation; ambition and lust for power grow beyond all limits, and these excrescences endanger the soul. How unanimously all the facts give the lie to the prejudices of our age! The Japanese of the old régime do not regard themselves as individuals in the modern sense, and they are, humanly speaking, nevertheless far more valuable than most of the moderns. I am reminded of Laotse's verse:

> Heaven is eternal and the earth enduring.
> The cause of the eternal duration of heaven and earth is
> That they do not live unto themselves.
> Therefore they can give life continuously.

And again:

> He puts his own being behind,
> And his own being advances.
> He discards his own being,
> And his being is preserved. Is it not thus:
> Because he wants nothing for his own
> Therefore his own becomes perfect?

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I HAVE now also made the acquaintance of some of the great men of the Empire: they can hardly be referred to in the same breath as the common herd. The best among them have something of the old Roman, something keen, clear; their superi-

ority is to them a matter of course; and none of them has anything of the artist, anything sweetly delicate, or exquisite. They rather appear hard, and as though they might be cruel. The common Japanese qualities of quickness, sure vision and rapid understanding of everything tangible, seem to have a different connection in their case: what usually tends to make artists of the Japanese here benefits the spy, the gift of consideration the diplomat, while versatility and pliancy help the 'reorganiser'; here the tenacity of the race expresses itself in the form of iron will, and their matter-of-factness makes practical politicians of such an extreme variety of them as no Machiavelli has ever produced among us. Thus the problem as to how the Japan of Lafcadio Hearn was capable of such great political deeds does not arise at all; this Japan has merely shared in the transformation. The latter was begun and carried out by other types of men, to whom far-sighted action is as natural as the dwarfing of trees is to the market gardener.

Still, the leaders in Japan are not leaders altogether in our sense, and that is what is Japanese in them; they are not so much factors as exponents. No matter how great their individual importance may be occasionally, their power depends upon their being representatives. In the case of the emperor, this relation is obvious: not only in Japan, but everywhere else in the world where this position is still surrounded by a mythical halo, it is more important that some one is the ruler rather than who the ruler is; his effect is creative in all circumstances as the focus of popular belief. The same applies to the statesmen who have made Japan great. In all probability they all stood and stand as personalities below the level which the quality of their work lets us suppose; they could achieve it because they were borne aloft by the people. Where the consciousness of the individual amounts less to self-consciousness than the consciousness of belonging to a group, there he does not see something outside himself in his leaders, but real organs of his own being, and he obeys them as if he were acting on his own instructions. Thus, the guarantee for the calling of leadership in Japan depends, for the largest part, on perfection in the organisation of the people. This means that as

long as the organisation is good born leaders will not become extinct. Accordingly they display here a superiority such as can hardly be found anywhere else; Count Okuma is conscious of his influence in the same sense as an emperor is conscious of his divine right, and this consciousness as such means power.

What I have stated here concerning the actual relation between the leaders and the led in Japan, sounds like a description of the ideal of democracy. Is it not significant that this has never yet been demonstrated by a democracy, but often by an aristocratic community? So long as the individual thinks atomically—and this is no doubt the main distinguishing feature of democracy—so long will a perfect organisation of the community remain impossible. The ideal is certainly capable of realisation in principle also where personalities have become autonomous. But to do so they must have attained to a degree of inner culture of which there is not the faintest sign in present-day democracy.

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MY impressions are forming themselves more and more into one general picture. So much is quite clear to me: the Japanese, or rather, those social layers of them who count politically, are not Orientals, if the concept of the Oriental is understood to include simultaneously the essential qualities of the Chinese and the Indians; the Japanese are nearer to us than they are to the Chinese, and to this extent they have a divine right to emulate us. Their similarity to the Chinese depends, for the most part, on the culture imported from China; according to their temperament they are, like ourselves, a progressive people, which, moreover, their history demonstrates unmistakably from the beginning up to the present day; they went to school, as it were, in Korea and China in former days in exactly the same sense as they emulate us to-day. For this reason, the Westernisation of Japan cannot be regarded in the same light as that of India or China. When I sailed through the inland sea, I was not a little surprised by the impression of entering into a world entirely new to me, which was divided

by a profound chasm from that of China; it seemed to me as if I was breathing the same atmosphere as in the Greek archipelago, the atmosphere of a daring and adventurous seafaring life; I felt nothing of that cosmic calm, the majestic peace of China, nothing even of the Japan which Lafcadio Hearn has described. This Japan, of course, exists. But I may say to-day that my first general impression was correct: the essential characteristic of the Japanese people is their enterprising, exploiting quality, their pliant, practical adaptability, not their *Japonerie*.

The Japanese is typically not a creator, nor is he an imitator, as has been asserted generally—he is essentially an exploiter in the sense of the jiu-jitsu fighter: jiu-jitsu is the very symbol of the Japanese. What are the qualities which are required to be a master of this art? Not creative initiative, but, on the other hand, an extraordinary power of observation, an instantaneous understanding for the empirical significance of every expression, and the ability to draw the greatest possible practical advantage from it; it requires to the utmost that particular co-operation of head and hand where all recognition leads instantly to the most appropriate reaction of movement, in which all memory expresses itself as automatic action. All specifically Japanese civilisation depends upon this ability, and Japanese 'imitation' in particular has this significance. The Japanese does not really imitate—he derives an advantage, just as the wrestler does from the movements of his opponent; he does not copy, but he changes his attitude; it is given to him to enter with incomparable ease into all alien appearance, so as to understand from within its peculiarity (not its essential nature!); having thus entered into organic relation with it, he then exploits it so far as it can be exploited. In this way the Japanese once exploited the culture of China. Perhaps he never understood it, but it cannot be asserted either that he merely imitated it externally—he had become absorbed completely in its appearance, and then proceeded to live with a Chinese attitude. All forms contain specific possibilities, which become realised relatively independently of the fact whether their temporary bearers understand them, whether they mean anything to them or not; thus, the Japanese have

developed much that is Chinese in accordance with their very own spirit. They were never really animated by the Chinese spirit; they merely wore Chinese garb. Therefore they have remained almost untouched inwardly. I have pointed to the fact already, how little the Japanese have become changed inwardly in spite of all the influences to which they have submitted themselves: this is due to their temperament, which has been described above. The Japanese may assimilate more alien matter than any other man on earth without having to fear any harm, because he is at bottom unsusceptible of influence.

The culture of China is a culture of expression, the culture of Japan one of attitude: it is difficult to conceive a more violent contrast; whereas the one has its root in profundity, the other exhausts itself on the surface. There is no doubt that the Japanese is unsubstantial: where attitude is the last premise, there inner content must be lacking. But it is precisely on this fact that the importance of Japan is based: it shows how far one can get without being substantial. One can get incredibly far. The Japanese have given values to the world which would never have been realised without them, they have created a superficial culture more charming than any other on earth. For this reason it is unjust to tarry longer with their insufficiencies. Substantiality is not a frequent phenomenon anywhere; even among Indians there are Japanese, in so far as they are to be defined by their negative qualities; but the unsubstantial non-Japanese do not possess the advantages of the Japanese. No being is responsible for his natural disposition; there are creatures whose minds can give expression to supreme being, there are others in whom their attitude is the ultimate fact. They are all equal before God in so far as they are perfect after their kind. But we human beings should learn at last to value every creature according to its own nature, and only demand from him what he is capable of.

The Japanese may become Westernised without apprehension: whereas the Indians and Chinese may not do so, because, in the case of the Japanese, it is not a question of a

real change, but only of assuming a new attitude as a fighter does. The problem, however, is not exhausted by this recognition: the Japanese possesses a soul in spite of all his adaptability, and even if his soul seems exposed to less danger than would be the case with other peoples who submit to alien influences, his soul is nevertheless not exempt by some special charm; if the Japanese becomes contaminated at all, then his case is worse than that of any one else. There are two fundamental feelings which must never be infringed if Japan is not to decay: one is their feeling for nature, the other their specific patriotism.

I have already given my views concerning both these points; I only need to summarise what I have said and apply it to my present purpose. The feeling for nature in the Japanese corresponds to the metaphysical feeling for the world of the Indian, and the consciousness of harmony of the Chinese; it is the same synthesis *en miniature*, and has the same profound reason. If it disappeared from his consciousness he would lose thereby the connection with his deepest self. Everything by means of which he might attempt to replace this fundamental quality would remain a superficial attainment, without direct connection with his soul. Suppose an Indian tried to change himself into a Greek: he would undoubtedly become superficial; not because his original tendency to see man as part of nature is objectively more profound, compared with the Greek view, to whom she remains something external and pictorial, but because he would not be capable of relating the Greek outlook on the world to what is profoundest in himself. In the case of the Japanese the same typical danger is considerably greater, because his field of vision is much more limited, because incomparably fewer phenomena are capable of a relationship with his soul. Thus, naturalism would not only lower Japanese art, as in our case, but it would literally kill it; and in the same way, lack of politeness makes the Japanese not merely unpleasant, as it does every one else, but superficial. If Japan does not cherish its feeling for nature proportionately more as it emulates us more intensively in other directions, it

may happen that one day its organism will be without a soul. The other feeling which Japan must not lose at any price is its patriotism; that peculiar synthesis of feeling which has died out in Europe, and is only revived for short periods during wars, I mean the synthesis of the individual, the group, the country and the ruling family. The Japanese are not yet individuals in our sense; their centre still lies in the group; for this reason Westernisation will suit them only as long as the new organisation can be related to the old basis. Whereas progress in our case was a result of individualisation, in Japan it is until to-day an expression, amongst other things, of the non-individualised group-consciousness, and it might lead to stagnation or decomposition if the individual did become conscious of himself in the Western sense. The latter is already beginning; and it is beginning too soon. The younger generation gives its leaders much food for anxious thought, for it is betraying a questionable inclination to deny their old basis. If this process cannot be stopped or restricted, then the admirable structure of Mutsuhito and his ministers may collapse. It must therefore be arrested at any price. This is what Nogi meant when he disembowelled himself—he hoped that his action might cause the inherited Samurai-feeling to flame up again in the younger generation; this is what the Government is doing in trying to bring about, by all the means in its power, a renaissance of Shinto. Let us hope that they will be successful; I am concerned for the future of Japan. The more inevitably it appears that the old basis will collapse, the more must every possible effort be made to establish new living relations between the body and the soul, so that a new structure will at any rate have been started when the old house crumbles into dust. . . .

Yes, Japan may become Westernised. But after I have been strictly objective for such a long time, I feel impelled to give vent to my personal feelings, and I must then say: personally, I regret deeply that this country is Westernising itself; modernised Japan is entirely devoid of charm; the atmosphere of Tokyo in particular is oppressively trivial. Normal development unfortunately does not necessarily lead upward. Just as

some individuals are themselves in the best sense when children, others when grown-ups, and again others when octogenarians, there is a stage of development for every people which is best suited to them; if it grows beyond this stage, even in the most desirable direction, it loses its charm, importance and value. In this sense, Frenchmen have declined since the eighteenth century, although there cannot be any question of degeneration even to-day; in the same way, England, whose height was attained in the nineteenth century, will lose henceforth in cultural significance. Every specific condition gives the soul definite means of expression, of which only a few correspond to it in that sense, as specific ability corresponds to a specific spirit. The moment or the epoch in which inner temperament and opportunities correspond to each other, signifies the zenith of a nation; it is then that the national genius manifests itself. Later on, the nation resembles more or less a Raphael without hands.[1]

The Japanese show surprising attainments in their new course. As far as their achievements are concerned, there is no reason to suppose that one day they may not rival us. But these achievements signify nothing. Here they work with intellect alone, or, put more generally, with the tools of their soul, their inner being is left out of account; and I cannot imagine that time will bring any real improvement. The Japanese soul will never learn to express itself directly or completely in the language of Occidental ability; at best it will stutter in this language, and it is not impossible that it will become dumb; the most exquisite and most artistic type of man may yet become dry-as-dust. Judged from the point of view of his substance, the Japanese is wrong to pursue problems which are all too serious: he realises himself best in play; everything really original lies along the line of ἀγόν, sport, of cheerful artistry. Here the profundities of his soul are revealed. But where he strives after important things in the worldly sense, he appears abstract.

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[1] I have developed this trend of thought at length in the chapter "The symbolism of history" in my book *Schoepferische Erkenntniss.*

some of the leading spirits of Japanese Buddhism are staying in Tokyo. I have taken the opportunity of correcting and enlarging the views which I have gained from conversation and the reading of holy writings, and I will now attempt to give a summarising judgment concerning Japanese Buddhism.

The more detailed my study of Mahayana doctrine has become, the more I am impressed by its philosophical value. I know nothing which could be adduced against the meaning of its fundamental ideas, no matter how much may be wrong and superannuated in their individual manifestations, and the development of Japanese Buddhism converges to such an extent with what are becoming the Christian world conceptions, that one might almost say that it signifies the line of indifference between the Eastern and the Western spirit. The philosophy of Acvagosha is, to old Indian philosophy, about what that of Hegel is to that of Parmenides, or that of Bergson to the philosophy of Spinoza. That is to say, living dynamism has replaced abstract statism, and this involves an absolute advance in recognition. The old Indians meant perhaps the same as the founders of the Mahayana doctrine, but they did not know how to express themselves adequately; with their minds bent upon the ultimate significance of events and things, they disregarded matter and thus arrived at a theory of eternal being which was said to exist in opposition to the flow of appearances. Acvagosha then achieved the same methodological act which was later performed by Hegel and Bergson, and which has stamped them on their own historical level as pioneers: it re-established the connection between Being and Becoming, which had been destroyed by preliminary thought. Acvagosha recognised that Being and Becoming are only different aspects of one and the same absolute reality; that, therefore, metaphysical Being and 'Becoming and Decaying' synchronise, and that duration of time is, in this connection, an absolute reality. Thus, he arrived at the same critical result to which a similar fundamental recognition has led Bergson in our day: that metaphysical significance is not to be sought for outside the process of concrete 'Becoming.' So far, Bergson has not gone further than this; he has not yet touched upon the

world of ethical commandments. But if he does so one day, then he will no doubt make the same assertion as Acvagosha 1,700 years ago: that since metaphysical significance is not to be sought outside concrete 'Becoming,' all ideal postulates must also be capable of realisation within it. Bergson would not teach anything new in saying so, since this view is the guiding motif of all Christian philosophies. When Acvagosha, however, taught the same, he performed a regular *volte-face*: compared with the old Indian philosophy, no matter how logical the development was which led him to this point, the inner attitude implying negation of the world changed into one of affirmation. If the highest ideal is to be realised within the world of 'Becoming'—no matter at what higher level, that of the Arhat, the Bodhisattva, the Buddha—then the very reason for existence has been taken away from the ideals of the Yogi, which are all based upon the desire to get beyond appearance; then the colour of the Samsara no longer appears dark, for then history has been given back its meaning, or rather, a new and higher meaning has been imparted to it. According to the old Indian philosophy, there was no meaning whatever in history, since they accepted progress as existent only in the sense of becoming free from appearance, and did not classify empirical conditions as such; but the problems of history did arise for the believer in Mahayana doctrine. Thus, an evolution set in which was parallel down to details with that of Christianity. Northern Buddhism conquered the world irresistibly; it regarded it as its mission to convert humanity, whereas Southern Buddhism, like Hinduism, never assumed such a duty. Accordingly it suited its methods of teaching to the given circumstances, and the spirit of knowledge of men and of politics was wedded to that of religiosity. This in its turn inevitably led to organised professions of faith, and further to the formation of sects; and the more the pragmatic attitude predominated over the desire for pure recognition, the more did its dogma resemble that of Christianity. The teachings of Christianity and most sects of higher Buddhism are so similar that the leading missionaries incline to the view that this higher Buddhism really was Christianity; a further development of the

teachings of Jesus Christ, not of Gautama Buddha. Up to a certain point this may be correct. But the surprising convergence within the development of their dogmas might very well have come about without any direct historical interdependence: the spirit of Mahayana and that of Christianity were closely related; thus, similar circumstances necessarily produced similar manifestations. Still, there can be no question of the identity of both religions, because the confessional manifestation in the case of Buddhism does not signify anything ultimate; to Buddhism, which in this respect has remained completely Indian, it is a temporary and surmountable phenomenon. If one must insist on its Christian character, one may say: Mahayana teaching is the kind of Christianity which would have developed among Indian sages. Philosophically, it towers high above the faith of the Westerners; but in efficacy it cannot stand the comparison. It is too all-embracing in its significance to appear single and act accordingly. The Church, in particular, in Japan, is most unsubstantial; it is art rather than life, a fair form rather than deep significance. But Indian doctrine is innocent of this Church; it is solely the work of Japan.

Of all traditional religions, Mahayana-Buddhism most closely resembles in idea the teaching which the God-seekers of our day are anticipating as the religion of the future; it is essentially without dogma, has a profound understanding of the value of cults, excludes no form of recognition, has something to offer to every temperament; it is wide and profound, like Brahmanism, and also cognisant of the world and energetic, like Christianity. But just because it embodies an ideal for the future, it is only appropriate to the present state of affairs to a limited degree; I recognise this fact all the more clearly, the more I speak with the representatives of this faith. Its form is too wide, too loose, to be a formative factor for the average man; it does not act as an appropriate vessel for limited spirituality, especially one which is so little intellectual as that of the Japanese. I do not believe that any Japanese, either of to-day or of the past, ever did justice to the philosophical content of Mahayana doctrine. They once upon a time imported

it, just as they have introduced our technology to-day; they have always discovered, quickly and surely, the best in every department and turned it to their own advantage whenever possible. But man can only assimilate what is appropriate to his temperament, and this was never the case with Indian mysticism in relation to the Japanese; only the emotional and practical elements of the Mahayana religion have become vital forces in Japan. All specifically Japanese sects of Buddhism are essentially unphilosophic, and those of the prelates of to-day who concern themselves with its speculative elements do so only as scholars; what is vital in it is beyond their understanding.

For the rest, the Japanese are not essentially more irreligious than we are, whom they resemble much more closely than they do the Chinese or the Indians. Their cultured classes do not as a rule believe in any definite religion, like most Europeans of to-day. And here as well as there, the simple people are blind believers; both develop, in contradistinction to the Indians, into agnostics as soon as their thought becomes emancipated, because they cannot as yet embark upon the road to God through recognition, and the process of thought distracts when it begins from the directness of experience; just like the Japanese, our religious leaders belong, almost without exception, to the emotional and practical types, and as far as thought and recognition are concerned, they have been mediocrities. Only that which is typical of both worlds appears in a more extreme form in Japan. Perhaps only once, in the figure of St. Francis of Assisi, has the Bhakta experienced a perfect embodiment among us; among the Japanese this has happened on countless occasions; their delicate and feminine sensibility offered love a unique possibility of materialisation. And our religious leaders have only rarely been so extremely practical as many have been in Japan. I had the good fortune to-day to make the acquaintance of the most important representative of the latter kind, the Abbot Soyen Shaku of Kamakura, the head of one of the branches of the Zen-sect.[1] The Zen-sect is

[1] See his *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot*, translated by Super Ki, Chicago, 1906, The Open Court Publishing Company.

the most philosophical of higher Buddhism; it teaches direct absorption in God, independent of book knowledge and cults; its theory is almost identical with that of Shankara, and its practice is real Yoga practice. This teaching, introduced in China by Bodhidharma, was originally the most purely Indian of all. But just because it teaches inwardness and nothing else, it has produced profoundly different results among nations of different temperaments, just as Yoga always increases the existing peculiarities. Its Indian disciples were made more profound in recognition. In China it led to a unique revival of feeling for nature; the greatest masters of landscape painting were all adepts in Zen. In Japan it became the central school for heroism. The Japanese, to whom philosophy means little, recognised at an early stage that nothing heightens and strengthens the powers of the soul more than such training; and therefore just the warriors, the Samurais, showed a preference for education by the Zen monks. Hōjō Tokimune, the hero who made the Mongol hordes of Kubla-Khan retreat, used to spend hours in meditation. Even to-day the same is true: several of the leading men of modern Japan have been disciples of Soyen Shaku. I visited him in his temple at Kamakura. I have never yet had such an impression of inwardness, coupled with equal martial energy; this delicately built monk is thoroughly military in appearance. How he must have inspired the troops whom he accompanied through Manchuria! The method by which he teaches meditation is hard. The pupils sit in a large, empty room in the attitude of Buddha; the abbot walks up and down between them, stick in hand, and if some one goes to sleep he kicks him; if any one gets tired he is not allowed to rest before the lesson is at an end, but only to go the round a few times in silence with his hands folded and held up above his head. Afterwards the teacher holds a merciless cross-examination to discover whether the pupils have mastered their subject. I discussed the significance of these practices with the venerable abbot. He is a philosopher who understands the spiritual meaning of the Zen doctrine to the full. But his outlook is that of the man of practical life. He did not regard it as the aim to tarry in the realm of

revelation, but the object was to steel the forces in striving after it to such a degree that they were a match for all the ideal problems of this life. How 'Western' is the spirit which spoke through him! I am thinking of American New Thought: this doctrine does not regard Christianity very differently from the way in which Soyen Shaku regards the doctrine of Sakyamunis. And then, with a smile, I think of the relativity of the value of all conceptual manifestations. . . .

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YESTERDAY, the last day but one before I leave Japanese soil, I delivered a lecture to the professors and students of the Faculty of Philosophy on my experience in Indian Yoga, and on the vital significance of this art. The problems seemed strange to my listeners; apparently it had never occurred to them hitherto to study the ancient wisdom, not only by text-criticism from the outside, but from within. What one of these gentlemen said to me in reply was most noteworthy. They (the Japanese) were so accustomed to the fundamental Buddhist ideas that they involuntarily failed to notice them. In point of fact the same thing happens to many of us in regard to Christianity, and this is undoubtedly an important cause of the interest which Europe has lately betrayed in the religions of the East. Europe has become tired of Christianity, which is bound to happen sooner or later to everything with which we are familiar, and to the profundity of which we can no longer do justice. Only the unfamiliar stimulates us; it causes more vital vibrations, even if there is no doubt that the new and the familiar subjects mean the same, and this stimulating effect continues even if one proceeds at once (which happens frequently) to interpret habitual concepts as unfamiliar ones. Thus, the Japanese scholars find more stimulus in Christianity than in Buddhism, and overestimate it accordingly, whereas we to-day tend to the opposite mistake. But does this imply an objection against interest in alien things? Certainly not; least of all in the case of religion. Here it is a question of *realisation*, and realisation only, and if an alien form does better service than the inherited one, it is a matter of course that

we must accept it. Generally this acceptance only implies a bypath to the old form, as may be seen already to-day in the West, where the enthusiasm for India ultimately comes to benefit Christianity (not one of the latter most recent and most profound interpretations would have been possible without unconscious influence by the spirit of Indian philosophy). For the rest, this phenomenon proves once more the blessedness of non-uniformity. Man needs alien elements, which he may overvalue, not to get weary of his own peculiarity, to maintain it alive and to prevent it from becoming rigid, and this interchange is the very condition of the harmony of the whole. Could poets flourish if they did not look up to heroes? Or statesmen if they did not overestimate the poets? Would the Germans be what they are, the most universally cultured nation, without their much-blamed national defect of preferring foreign values to their own? Just he who is most concerned with co-operation has least cause to support the foolish ideal of uniformity, for a living harmony is possible only owing to the interaction of thesis and antithesis.

But to return to my lecture: it was objected at its conclusion that what I had learnt from the Brahmins I might also have found in the Christian mystics. In this respect my listeners were mistaken. No matter how true it may be in general that alien phenomena as such are stimulating, no matter how often it may happen that there is no profounder motive at the bottom of our preference for India, Christian Yoga has not the same significance for us moderns as Indian Yoga has; and this because the former is operative exclusively in the sphere of subjective emotion, and because no recognition can be derived through feeling.[1] The man who longs fervently for the Mother of God may perhaps one day catch a glimpse of her, but we will never be able to ascertain whether his vision corresponded to an objective reality. What is so wonderful in Indian Yoga is the perfect rationality of its methods. We do, of course, not know whether it leads with certainty to the goal

[1] I have explained the true relation of thought and feeling from the point of view of progress in the chapter 'Antikes und Modernes Weisentum' in *Schoepferische Erkenntniss.*

it is supposed to lead to, and whether the phenomena with which it is connected have been recognised and interpreted correctly; but in principle the possibility exists of testing the exactitude of its assertions along with its theories. And this assures the greater value to the Indian doctrine of self-culture compared with the corresponding Christian doctrines. Modern humanity is intellectualised to such an extent that only that which has been understood can hope to take hold of its inmost soul. The Indians alone have understood what was the uniform experience of all profound men.

We Europeans are beginning to recognise this more and more. Will the peoples of the East, in so far as they become unfaithful to their inheritance, do the same? Perhaps not; for apparently the mere need for change, which lies at the bottom of our Indomania and the Japanese Christomania depends for its own part on something deeper: the law according to which a certain manifestation can never serve the same people twice as a vessel of the highest ideal. Greek art is, even to-day, a spiritual leaven for the world, but it is not the Greeks who continue to foster it; the same applies to the world of forms of the Renaissance, of Byzantine and Buddhist art, and the same applies to forms of thought and belief. Here too the once-and-for-all principle applies which governs all life; every definite being, as such, must die, and its immortal part continues to exist only in perpetual new incarnations. So much at any rate is certain, that our orientalisation and the westernisation of the East, which are developing in the widest sense at present, mean something much more profound than has hitherto been recognised: they imply that renewal of the means of expression which alone makes rejuvenation possible. The mere fact that there is a general demand for rejuvenation proves that the world is really becoming new again; a period which merely continues or concludes does not know any struggle for renewal. Neither Buddhists nor Christians in their historical forms represent final stages. What has never existed as yet longs to be created and seeks with passionate zeal for suitable parents, like the soul returning to life upon earth. Apparently we stand on the threshold of a period similar to

that which marked the first century after Christ. At that period too there was a general change, even then East and West joined hands, and the result will be to-day, as it was then, an enlargement of the basis of life. For, no matter how exclusive the manifestations were which originated from this fusion—Christianity as well as Buddhism is what it is only as the heir of everything which preceded it.[1]

However, the various life-forces in themselves will remain different for ever; the living principles of East and West are not exchangeable or transferable; if we assimilate the knowledge of the East, this does not mean that we are acquiring its soul, but that we create new organs for our own, and the same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the East.[2] If we consider the problem of influence in regard to its significance to a given soul, such as takes place during critical periods, the following is the case: far from implying an alteration of being, the acceptance of alien phenomena represents rather at certain times the shortest path to self-realisation. We would never have become 'Westerners,' if the Germanic people had not once taken over the Syrian faith; and we will only perfect ourselves at our level after fertilisation and rejuvenation through the Indo-Chinese spirit. Let us hope that the situation in Japan is similar. The regeneration which foreign influence exercises in the long run is inevitably introduced by a period of apparent decay; thus it will probably take a little while before the Japanese will be able to work independently with our means: to-day they seem even more mechanical than we do. We too are still slaves of our tools of recognition. The specifically European Yoga (the observation of the outer world) has led to the creation of an enormous apparatus, the control of which requires an equivalent inwardness. And we lack this just because our aspirations have been directed to external things; we too are the serfs of the spirit which we

[1] My book *Schoepferische Erkenntniss* traces the outlines of the new world which is in the making; it shows, moreover, in what sense history is just beginning.

[2] See my lecture, first delivered in English in China, now reprinted in German in *Philosophie als Kunst*, 'Uber die inneren Beziehungen zwischen den Kultur Problemen des Orients und Okzidents.'

created, like the Zauberlehrling of Goethe. The fact that our failings are even more obvious in the case of the Japanese is only natural. Sooner or later, and probably sooner than we think, they too will, in their way, work their way up from slaves to masters.

For us, however, it is precisely the insufficiency of the Japanese in our sense which interests us; it is perhaps more significant for humanity in general than their greatest triumph could be: it illustrates with incomparable distinctness the main and fundamental weaknesses of that civilisation which is conquering the world to-day. In fact, the enthusiasts of progress are aiming at precisely that which has robbed the modern Japanese of his value as a human being. What they wish to overcome is not their crudeness but their humanity, the inherited belief that no earthly gain can compensate for the hurt of the soul; what they strive after is existence, purely instrumental in character, which the Westernised Far Eastern Asiatic embodies. He stands there to-day without any cultural inhibitions; he sees in himself only a means of becoming powerful and rich, and believes in success pure and simple. And he is absolutely right in so far as any justification can be admitted for his 'philosophy,' for he has had the most successful career of all people who have ever lived. Thanks to the absolute surrender to what is purely external, he has achieved in some thirty years what Europe, teeming with ideals, has taken centuries to accomplish: it is therefore in the nature of this civilisation to favour soullessness.

PART SEVEN: TO THE NEW WORLD

54

ON THE PACIFIC

SLOWLY the ship glides out into that ocean over which man has no more dominion than the dolphin. How blissful to be able to forget the peculiarity of one's position! How very much it enlarges the basis of experience! I have never spent any length of time in centres of civilisation without being ultimately overcome by a feeling of aversion: not against culture as opposed to nature, but against the human element. There are certainly all sorts of things to be said for man, but why tarry there? What do the advantages of one animal species signify in relation to a world? People like to laugh at the scientist whose interest in life centres exclusively in ants; I regard the one-sided investigator of civilisation as equally ridiculous. Since we are human, we have, for good or ill, to fulfil our human destinies: to produce children, to breed cattle, to rule states, to write books, as the case may be; in exactly the same sense as one would have had to gather pine needles if one had been born into the world an ant. But to extend one's free interest in humanity over and above this—that is too much.

The continuous conceit, especially of white men, prompts me, by way of reaction, to incline to estimate him below his value. Asiatics do not overestimate themselves anything like as much as we do; accordingly in India I felt no kind of aversion to human beings. But in India man has hardly impressed his specific nature upon appearance; there, men stand out against the rest of creation hardly differently from the way in which one species of animals stands out against another. In Japan their peculiarity dominates; nothing like as unpleasantly aggressive as in our case, but it happens for all that. For this reason I am delighted, although I have learned to love Japan, that the hour of departure has come.

The heights are already beginning to sink below the horizon. The sea-mews which accompany us are turning back. Within

a further brief hour, the last memory of the mainland will have disappeared.

✦

THIS is the ocean. For days no steamer, no sailing ship; nor shall we meet one for days to come. I spend most of my time in the bows, in order to separate myself as much as possible from my human surroundings. Again and again I imagine where I am, what the ocean means; how here, only here, life has continued uninterruptedly from Silurian times. And the magic of immeasurability seizes hold of me more and more.

I feel very, very happy. That is because I am completely lonely, and nothing prevents me from denying all boundaries and barriers. How can one feel isolated as long as one is alone? The consciousness of isolation is the result precisely of being together with others. Only where one is in the company of others is one arrested and mercilessly tied down by one's limitations. As soon as one is alone, all isolation disappears. Then consciousness escapes one's personality. Then no tendency returns back into itself. Then one becomes wide as the world.

And if I drifted upon a rudderless float instead of being on a well-navigated steamer, would I not feel differently? Hardly, as long as the body did not speak too loudly and impose its needs upon the soul. For what difference exists, regarded from the angle of the spirit, between the ocean and that ego upon which I have drifted the whole of my life? Men like to compare their life with a ship, which is steered by the ego and glides along upon the stream of events: I cannot regard this picture as correct. My ego is ocean enough already; my ego *is* the sea in the sense of the usual comparison; it depends upon the course which I steer upon it what form my visible life takes on. Originally I am not master of my thoughts and feelings: they come and go according to some obscure natural law. My will is an impersonal power, so is my intellect; and my consciousness is a wide domain whose boundaries I do not know and can hardly guess at. I really

feel within myself as I do upon the sea. I must steer perpetually between my instincts, the aim in sight, otherwise I might suffer shipwreck. My person is the outer world in reference to my inmost self; I am not my person, I only move within it. And if inwardly I have taken a step forward, this means that I have advanced upon the sea; the previous position stands there in memory. Man travels through his body; the material changes, only the direction remains. Just so he wanders through his soul. The more he assimilates experiences, the more he finds out, the better does he know himself. The man who has reached the goal is he who knows the domain of his soul and controls it as the Viking does the sea.

Yesterday I watched some very curious flying fishes which flew up in surprise from the track of our steamer. My soul also produces similar phenomena. In my consciousness too, ideas occasionally spring up, which are probably at home in my subconscious, but which come as a surprise to me; and in me too there live creatures which resemble rays and sharks. I know it well enough: the dangerous elements which used to take hold of me so often in former days, but now hardly show themselves at all unless I relax in my dreams—they have not died; I simply do not meet with them any more. Every demon whom I have thought dead would fall upon me with undiminished power in a second if I stepped upon him unwarily. Of course, if I know where I am going, then I need not be in fear of the demons. In themselves they are well worth seeing. One must only know them, then one may even play with them.

It is not without satisfaction that I recall the mistakes which I have committed in the course of my life: if I had not committed them then, I would undoubtedly be a worse man to-day. Nor can I really regret, in my heart of hearts, that others were caused pain in the process. A certain amount of guilt is predestined from the start to every one who strives earnestly after perfection; this he ought to take upon himself from the beginning. In so doing he does, judged metaphysically, precisely what Jesus wanted to achieve historically

when He took the sins of the whole of mankind upon His shoulders.

✦

IN truth, who am I? The older problems come up again; only this time they appear less clear than usual, just as if the vibrations of the mind were softened by the waves of the sea. Regarded from the angle of phenomena, I am the mental image which controls me at the time. In the metaphysical sense I, Hermann Keyserling, probably do not exist at all. There is nothing concrete in me which was not created and does not pass away in me, nothing from which there is no escape or change, nothing with which I could identify the eternal element in me. All and every appearance is 'nature,' beginning with character down to the mood of the moment; what I regard as 'myself' is the passage of my mental images, as they are presented at a given moment. These mental images are sometimes of an inner, sometimes of an external origin, and which of them become the bearers of my lasting ego-consciousness depends, not upon their origin, but upon the intensity with which I embody them; the embodiment is the decisive factor. If this be true, then, judged from the Atman point of view, there is no difference between the originality of the genius and the obedience of a child. However, no embodiment is permanent; the only thing constant is the direction which the series of incarnations perseveres in. This direction alone then would be of purely inner origin, could possibly be regarded as 'self'; or else this self would be that which determines a change in a certain direction. But this view does not exhaust the difficulties of understanding the problem. Suppose I were the direction, or the directing factor: this self is then, at any rate, nothing personal; no matter whether, if it is ultimately an aspect of the all-embracing One or an independent monad—all discussion concerning this point is futile—it is not that which any one could regard as his ego. This is where the difficulties of the idea of immortality begin. The problem of continuation is, of course, a phenomenological, not a metaphysical problem, but it is precisely

as such that it mocks all tangible solution, because that which is felt to be the personal ego is the point of intersection of an infinite number of tendencies, of which the ego is but one, and precisely those among them which seem to be particularly personal, such as opinions, feelings, thoughts, determination by the will, demonstrably do not lead to infinity. The question would be most simple if I could regard myself as my problem or my ideal or my path; in that case I would literally continue to exist in the progressive effect of my ideas; in this case the immortality of Jesus, for instance, would coincide with the development of Christianity. To-day this attitude is more plausible to me than any other. I have served from my earliest childhood an ideal which, although I did not recognise it consciously at the beginning, nevertheless gave the direction to my life even then; from the very start I have had an intimate consciousness of what I should do (which sometimes appeared in the form of what I might or might not do), and this consciousness is so dominant that, even to-day, although I am determined enough and lack all inclination to self-sacrifice, I would surrender my person without question if I met a man as whose servant or tool I believed I could fulfil my mission better. My mission would thus be my real ego; I would continue to exist after my death as the effect produced by the solution of my problem. In case I do not fulfil my task altogether, and consequently fail to exhaust myself in my effects, it is conceivable that another possibility of future life might appear: my personal consciousness would coincide for a second time with the same problem. It can never be proved that such reincarnation does not exist, because the next individual who attempts the same problem will be conscious again as 'ego,' and therefore the form and the essential content of consciousness would be identical in both cases—but it is, of course, equally impossible to prove that such reimbodiments take place actually. Certainly, as I have said, no view commends itself more to me to-day than that an objectively real idea passes through various incarnations; that man is exactly as immortal as his ideal and exactly as real as the energy with which he serves it; I cannot believe that

continued existence is inevitable. Most people are really dead after death; that is to say, they cease to be the bearers of consciousness, no matter whether they continue to exist objectively; there are only a few who continue beyond a limited historical period. If, however, a man arises who knows how to incarnate a fundamental world-idea in his person, as Buddha and Christ succeeded in doing, then he goes on living through all eternity.

These are 'indoid' thoughts. Nothing is more characteristic for a philosophy than the kind of physical background which it demands, evokes or is able to support. Here upon the ocean I wanted to begin with the reading of the Bible in order, by this means, to swing back mentally to the West; however, this plan did not and will not materialise so long as the ocean is present. Compared with this expanse, the concentration which consciousness has experienced in Christianity appears as a limitation, to which the whole surroundings give the lie. I have said it already and I repeat it here, that, from the point of view of the active and creative man, Christianity is profounder than Buddhism because its doctrine makes the man of action more profound; God can also be found by striving to bring appearance to the utmost perfection; in fact, for every non-contemplative individual this is the shortest road to God. The man who is intent upon achievements must think something of himself, he must in fact overestimate himself, as his energy would otherwise become lame. For this reason it can hardly be avoided that the Karma Yogis overvalue and misunderstand themselves as individuals. . . . But the mood of the man of action cannot endure upon the ocean; there, consciousness denying all personal will involuntarily finds its centre in the universe like the drop in the ocean, not in the sense that it rises above all appearance, but that it may only contemplate the very vastest phenomenal complexes. Thus, Buddhist trains of thought arise inevitably on the Southern sea: for no one has understood the correlation of appearances more profoundly, or presented them more impressively, than the Tathāgata.

✦

I AM never tired of watching the flight of the albatross, seven of which are already accompanying us. At times they remain behind us for hours, probably in order to search hunting-grounds at some distance, or to slumber a little upon the way. Then suddenly they are there again, as if the steamer had not advanced at all in the meantime. And how they sail! This gliding flight seems to me to be perfection itself. Once they are in motion, they never make a steering movement: the mere alteration of the angle which their wings form with the surface of the sea, the rhythmic rising and falling, the clever exploitation of the streams of the air suffice them to produce with the least expenditure of power a speed which seems to be unaffected by time. It is marvellous to watch how these living sailing ships cruise; they are most beautiful perhaps when, wishing to describe a sharp turn, they throw themselves over on one side and dip one wing deep into the water, in order to find more resistance.

These birds of the high seas belong to the most wonderful creations in nature. They are beings who, without being water animals, do not need the mainland; they rest upon the way, they are borne aloft by the wind; to them the monotonous expanse of the ocean is a domain to be surveyed as easily as the townsman surveys the district in which he dwells. Undoubtedly they are supplied with senses of which we have no conception. They somehow have *a priori* knowledge of the fundamental facts of geography; they are masters of meteorology, they feel directly the distance at which they are from the mainland. And yet, from our point of view, they are dull. Without a sextant, without intellect, without any of the tools which are at the disposal of civilised man, and presumably without a clear consciousness, the albatross nevertheless knows its way about the sea better than the most experienced captain.

It would be well if mankind were a little more reticent in its disdain of the capacities of animals. There are many ways of entering into relation with the world, and our way is not the best in all directions. Every being is harnessed in the universal cohesion, and possesses in general outline the qualities which he needs for purposes of self-preservation. Where his

position is a very unfavourable one, there he requires the most remarkable capacities. The amœba is in many ways more gifted than we are; the worm, constantly threatened by dissection, regenerates himself like an Indian god; man is probably capable of all sorts of things which awake the envy of the gods. Absolute, uncompensated advantages cannot be proved to exist in this universe. Thus, one may revere an ideal in the albatross which is more unattainable to man than the condition of divinity.

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HONOLULU

THE aquarium of Honolulu is quite rightly regarded as one of the wonders of this world. There are fishes there glistening like jewels, with contours as strange as the grotesque drawings of Japanese artists, as gaily coloured as butterflies and humming-birds. In this water there lives all the shimmering gorgeousness which usually only peoples the air.

I am trying to penetrate the meaning of this manifestation. Biologically, it is not a question of a special problem, because the colours are not really extravagant; they often contribute to the protection of the animals. The dark blue fishes with the velvet sheen and bird-like beaks must be invisible in the depth, and the same is probably true of the yellow ones; the gaily coloured fishes, however, which strike the eye almost painfully in the bare glass containers, undoubtedly lose their startling appearance against the background of a coral reef. They move, moreover, with the utmost skill. The most remarkable specimen of the collection is a moon-shaped, two-dimensional fish, with black and yellow stripes, whose back fin is elongated into a flag. This flag is so disproportionately long that its owner can only move with difficulty, for its extremity is at the mercy of every current. This cunning creature, however, only lives in archways of rocks, and then moves in such a way that the play of colours of his tail glisten and glimmer and the flag acts as the arm of an octopus, which

every robber cautiously avoids. So much is obvious. However, the problem of life is not solved by pointing to the appropriateness of its organs. The colours of Hawaiian fishes are not the most appropriate of all those which are conceivable, but that is what they would have to be if their suitability were to explain everything. These colours do not connote a necessity either, for protective colours could have been achieved with less expenditure of effort; in fact, less colouring would undoubtedly have been of greater advantage, for all these decked-out creatures which do not remain in a fixed place, but change their background frequently, are hardly less visible and endangered in the waters of the Pacific than the chaffinch is in the northern snow landscape. The quality of appropriateness only defines the lower limit; that is to say, no organism is so equipped that it could not exist and propagate itself. But if the life of some among them is no easier than that of the most exploited human serf, others occupy an incomparably more advantageous position. I can only explain the gorgeousness of colour of the fauna of the Pacific by the fact that Nature delights, no less than man, in fantastic feats. As I watch the effect of these animals upon me, I feel something like the same spirit which animated men like Gauguin and Robert Louis Stevenson. For 'spirit' is effective in everything that lives; in the case of plants and animals it still possesses, in the physical sphere, those qualities of freedom and invention which are confined almost completely to the psychic sphere in the case of human beings. Thus, those miracles of organisation come to be created, compared with which the human body seems so unsatisfying, thus the perfect adaptability of animals to their surroundings, their mutability and power of regeneration, are explained; these manifestations mean, in the physical sphere, precisely what invention and artistic creation mean in the psychic sphere. And just as man creates sometimes what is purely practical, sometimes, again, what is practical and simultaneously pleasing, and sometimes what is pleasing as a purpose in itself, just so Nature also oscillates between the poles of utility and beauty, and does not deny herself the luxury, where the general circumstances permit it, of giving

rein to her fancy. But how much more certain are her instincts! No matter how fantastic her ideas may be, she never creates anything which is untrue in itself, incapable of life or nonsensical. There is nothing futuristic about her; nor does she ever indulge in the bad habit of so many artists who are contented with a sketch. Some fishes do make one think that they may owe their origin to the whim of a moment rather than to a deep-rooted idea, that they are, so to speak, occasional poems; and that is probably what they are in so far as their possibility of significant existence seems tied to a particular condition, as the yellow-black flag fish seems confined to narrow slits of rock. But as expressions they are equally perfect; in no case has the execution failed.

Once more my observations lead me to an unfavourable judgment of humanity. Of course we embody richer possibilities than the animals, but how few we have translated, up to to-day, into values of reality! We appear like mere barbarians compared with the fishes of the South Sea. We are endowed with the gift of self-determination: who makes use of it? In Benares I once watched a flock of guinea-fowls being driven home: the herdsmen, with a palm in his hand, literally brushed them in front of him, and no sail ever answered to the changing wind more accurately than did these birds to the caprices of the driver. Are we human beings in any way different? To this extent perhaps, that we do not allow ourselves to be led by every one; if an unsuitable person stands at the head, then we act independently enough. But even the guinea-fowls would not have kept such good order if a dog instead of a man had been at the back of them. As soon as the right man takes on the leadership, ninety-nine out of every hundred renounce their autonomy with enthusiasm. . . . How lamentably men overvalue themselves! Poets believe that they have a monopoly of giving expression to the meaning of things: in point of fact, there have not yet been ten, from the days of antiquity up to the present, who have equalled any rose in this respect. No doubt more can be achieved in the psychic sphere than in the clumsy, unpliable physical world. But is it achieved? Only too rarely.

But I will return once more to the question of appropriateness. It is instructive to meet, among the curious creatures populating the aquarium, a figure which is not natural in its effect. In one of the glass containers there are Japanese ornamental fish. They are bred just as double carnations; they are the product of human imagination. They look pleasant enough in the beautifully shaped vases in which they are displayed in Japan, but they do not fit into different surroundings. Their tails are of no use for steering, they have developed into powerless appendages; their eyes are tired and too big, like those of lap-dogs; their all too round bodies can hardly divide the water any more. How helplessly such creatures behave, even in a sea *en miniature!* They can only be preserved artificially; left to themselves, their race would die in a few weeks. This consideration makes very plain what the truth is concerning the ideal of natural appropriateness. Of course we should not 'return' to Nature, for Nature herself never stands still; but we should only advance in such a direction as does not lead into a *cul-de-sac*. This was the case of the ancestors of the Japanese ornamental fish.

56

ON THE KILAUEA CRATER

THE moon may have offered a spectacle like this before she was burnt out; on earth there is nothing to equal it. A volcano, not a mountain vomiting fire, but a sea of fire, a sea as it sometimes rages in the north, when the spring tempests break up the ice. A wild surging, frothing, foaming, whirling mass around the melting floes. And the lava roars and sings like the sea.

In the daytime the spectacle is not particularly impressive; the cauldron is wide but confined, the material strikes one as so overpowering that one is reminded involuntarily of a furnace, and the awakened fancy does not soar towards the infinite, but towards limitation. However, since the sun has gone down, the picture grows grander from hour to hour. The rim

of the crater has become invisible, the scarias are opaque; it seems as if the fire stood out against endless space; one believes oneself to be looking closely into the seething of the sun. For a moment I feel uneasy: to behold such a spectacle is really denied to man. I ought to have been consumed at the first glimpse. Instead of this, I am lying, free from all danger, on the border of the gulf of fire, and at ease, like a god, I watch the beginning of all things.

Somebody speaks of hell. This is a comparison which would never enter my head here. It is possible that Vesuvius would conjure it up because it threatens a world of rich life with destruction; there the fire really symbolises death. Here, however, one cannot speak of death, because life is not yet born; here one attends those primeval events which took place at a time when life was not. Thus one experiences neither horror nor delight on the Kilauea, no human sentiment can exist here; I feel as the spirit must have felt when he moved upon the face of the waters. The thought strikes me: if I were to throw myself down into this fire, I could not possibly take any harm. As I am able to look upon it, I am obviously a spirit. This fire has absolutely nothing hostile about it, no primeval fire has in itself. If all Western myths associate the volcanic state with hell, and attribute the latter's most horrible abortions to the holiest of all elements, the reason must be sought in the fact that their inventors never had any communion with the volcanic world; they knew it not. And later on the barbaric Christian tendency arose to explain all nature as a medium for a distinct purpose, as an instrument for meting out reward or punishment. The fiction of the Hawaiians is better here. The myth of the Kilauea is as follows: long ago, Pele, a beautiful maiden, threw herself into the sea of fire to escape a hideous lover. Since then she lives in the crater as its soul, being also the guardian goddess of the whole archipelago. The Kilauea is never in eruption without a weighty reason: wisely does Pele govern the destinies of the isle. She set Kamehameha upon the throne by suffocating his enemies with sulphurous gases. Never does she hurt the innocent. She is a kind goddess: whenever, at set periods, the moment approaches

when she is forced to overflow, for reasons of her own, she warns her children in time; even the white men, who really treat her badly, and repeatedly have made themselves more obnoxious to her than reverence permits, have never suffered misfortune from her hands. More than once, foolhardy climbers, who were already in the act of falling, escaped death at the last moment, a thing which never could have happened without supernatural intervention.

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ON THE LAVA FIELD BEFORE THE KILAUEA

(*Early morning.*)

EVERY time when a new day dawns it seems to me as though the evolution of the world were starting all over again. The vapours and mists wipe out all individual shape. The contours grow uncertain. And the great holy stillness, not disturbed by so much as the cry of a lonely bird, breathes all over nature the atmosphere of the very beginning of things. Never have I experienced the feeling of primeval origin as strongly as here. Over there, in the clouds, the gulf of fire is miraged; fire glows from the sun on to the rocks and crags; from the rigid lilac-tinted lava yellow vapours of sulphur rise fitfully. And when the sun mounts a little higher, I perceive silvery, tropic-birds which circle over the wide and dark solitude like spirits from a better world.

The vegetation is also primordial. All plants which flourish here love sulphur; curious, fleshy growths, sallow in colour, but decked with burning red blossoms. Here and there a gigantic fern or a crippled little tree, which has evidently come into the world too soon. It cannot have looked very different in the age when the earth became the habitation of life for the first time. How did it come to be created? It is not worth while to ponder this; we cannot follow up this thought to the end. Perhaps, after all, the description in the Book of

Genesis is the most objective. We shall never get beyond the fact that life appeared here as soon as it became possible, and then all at once in manifold shapes and forms. How very ridiculous science is when it tries to explain away this miracle! Would it not be much more wonderful if Wagner had, somehow or other, succeeded in fashioning a homunculus than if the world was created according to the description in the Bible? As if that which is essentially appropriate and significant—life—were the result of pure chance? How it came to be, I know not. Brahma himself does not know, as the beautiful Indian saga shows. And I must acknowledge that it would vex me if the whole process could be made plausible. I love the miracle; I will have it so; perhaps precisely because in so many respects I am a fanatic for exactitude. I love Kant above all because his definition of our limitations has indirectly proved the existence of an absolutely inconceivable reality. For me, as for all honest men, it is quite impossible to imagine a world which could be essentially different from the human one, impossible to understand *in concreto* what it means, for instance, that distances in space do not possess transient reality. And therefore I am most heartily thankful, as soon as I think of it, that the primeval beginning cannot be explained in any way, that here at least mythology will for ever have the final word. But then, one myth is as probable as another in so far as it is probable in itself; why should not the first day have been exactly like the grey dawn of this morning? Deep silence, glowing fire; vapours of water and sulphur rising above dark plains of cooling matter. And suddenly, for the first time, and yet as if it could not be otherwise, the call of the first bird sounding in the distance.

I imagine myself back in those days when, as a young geologist, I wandered through the mountains. It did not last long: irresistibly I was drawn away from the stones to the living word. How reluctantly I performed in the end the tasks which I had undertaken! To-day I would not be opposed to returning to my starting-point. How much greater, more sublime, wider than any work of man, is nature, even when dead! In nature everything has been created in grandeur, is

sustained in grandeur . . . Mahomet's words come back to my mind: 'Verily the creation of heaven and earth is a greater thing than the creation of man; but most men do not understand this.' Yes, it is certainly better for us to ponder the works of nature than the greatest work of human genius. The geologist who contemplates the Alps, recognises with one comprehensive look billions of eventful years; in the mirror of intensified moments he actually sees how the mountains grew, how one fauna alternated with another, how in the end the picture we see to-day was consummated. Thus, he attends in spirit the first performance of the grand symphony of life: at the beginning only a few single notes were sounded, then ever more and fuller voices joined in, complicated melodies made themselves heard and their place was taken again and again by others, according to a plan traced in terms of time, which is only comprehensible when viewed from the perfected whole. He is not surprised by the seeming antagonism of simultaneity and succession, of change and constancy: in immutable types that counterpoint is realised which controls all melody inwardly without injuring it in its freedom. And in this way the spectacle of nature means much more to him than to the most impressionable of artists. If I have any advantage over many thinkers, it is the advantage of having been a naturalist by profession. Philosophers generally study Greek or Sanskrit or comparative literature. . . . That is perfectly right, but it seems to me that it would further them more to become absorbed in the evolution of the world. The music of the universe slumbers in the irrational laws of crystallisation; all artistic ideals are symbolically preconceived in the germ of the plasma. From the first breath of desire which trembled through shapeless chaos, an unbroken chain of developments leads to the Iliad and the Parthenon.

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AT THE CRATER AT NIGHT

To-night I keep guard at the creation of the world. Above me the stars glitter in infinity; at an immeasurable distance below me there surges the sea of fire: it is so far away that its boundaries may include a universe. I do not tire. What goes on before me is more than the most powerful destiny.

For hours I have been looking, with my attention at a stretch, down into the crater, attempting to become absorbed in its dynamic principle. In the qualitative sense the problem is not difficult: the forces which are at work here are all effective in my body, their laws are also my laws. But their measure, nevertheless, makes the problem impossible. Great quantity involves a new quality. No matter how much the atom may be a solar system 'in itself,' there is nevertheless a difference between it and the star of which it forms a fraction. I cannot experience inwardly the degree of intensity of the known forces which are expressed in the operation of the volcano; it is easy to describe, to understand and to explain it, but that is not what I mean.

How much more easily could the creation of the world be understood according to any myth! Every one of them, even the most childish, is humanly more probable than the phenomenology of radium, for the creation from nothingness by the will of a god is the heightened reflection of that which every man performs at every moment. I think of something, and immediately it stands there in my world of mental images; surely that means that I have spontaneously created an entity out of nonentity. I have achieved something just as immense as Jahveh when he created the world. And what I thus create is also 'very good' from the start, at any rate much better than I could ever make it by constructive thought. The 'nonentity' from which I have magically evoked an 'entity' can, of course, only be conceived materially; thus I am in principle not behind the Demiurge, even in this sense. Of course, the

substance of thought is much more formative than that which constitutes mountains. But if it is possible at all to influence matter by mind, then it must be possible to do so with heavier masses, quite apart from the probable fact that ultimately they consist of thought substance too. Indirectly, man achieves a good deal in this direction, but I am convinced that he could achieve even directly much more than is considered possible to-day—hardly less than the Indian Yogis assert. Concentration of attention is the concentration of psychic energy; a neurasthenic subject cannot concentrate himself: where then is the breach which shows the creation after the manner of Jehovah to be impossible in principle? If I, by perfect concentration of all the forces over which my consciousness has power in the best circumstances, issued the command: let there be light, then there probably would be light.

For a moment I hold on to this thought. It amuses me to try to hold the eruption in check by my will-power. I feel a little annoyed that I do not succeed, no matter how much I would regret it, on the other hand, if this magnificent spectacle before me came to an untimely end. What is the cause of my inability? Presumably a triviality, a trick; probably, given sufficient knowledge of nature, a volcano could be extinguished with just as little expenditure of effort as an electric bulb; probably it could be done quite directly without any apparatus to assist me. No matter how immense the powers below me are, the greatest of all, the intra-atomic energy, is not at work. If I could succeed, which is surely not difficult, in destroying but one cubic foot of lava, the volcano would have to be exceedingly careful as to its future.

No, there is no trace of life here. What is life? An immaterial principle which forms matter. It should, therefore, be possible to create a soul for the volcano. I incline more and more to the view that life is omnipresent and externalises itself as soon as the necessary material conditions seem to be fulfilled (which conditions, of course, life creates itself, at any rate partially). In the same way, mental personality is revealed as soon as the brain has become mature; in the same way, expression animates a picture as soon as a certain line has been

drawn; just such a profound meaning creeps into a meaningless sentence when but a single word is altered. And what is estranging and almost frightening is that this animation can be brought about by mere accident. Decidedly, I can hardly conceive of greater joys than to create souls. With every idea which man puts into the world, matter receives a new significance. In all seriousness: how would it be if I gave a soul to this volcano? But perhaps it has one already, according to the Hawaiian myth, and I am merely wanting in the organ with which to recognise it.

. . . Now the night is far spent. The lava has risen steadily, melting down ever wider circles of the mainland. The darker the background becomes, the more brightly do the flames shimmer. The red colour—predominant during the day—has now disappeared. Now the whole is a symphony in black and gold. Strange! Here in the face of this flaming world I am reminded of Japanese lacquer-work. Apparently it is the same principle which, in the one case, ekes out gold, and in the other fiery lava upon the dusky background.

. . . I have dozed a little after all. Was it the echo of an unconscious dream, induced by the conversation of the tourists? As I open my eyes, the sea of flame seems to be peopled by naked bodies. That was meant to be hell. But no: not one of the burning sinners seems to be tortured. The flames do them no damage; they cling to them as harmlessly as shadows.

. . . Dawn breaks. Once more, as on the first day of creation, heaven and earth are divided from one another. The belated moon hurries, insecure and pale, away from the laughing sun in a sweeping curve. Below in the cauldron the ebb has succeeded to the flow. The sea has shrunk together, seems inert, almost dead. The gold has been changed into a dull red. The black background, which but a little while ago was an endless world, reveals itself now as a dirty grey crust of dross.

59

THE BAY OF WAIKIKI

THE Greeks relegated the blessed to an island home: what could prove better than this the infallibility of their power of imagination? In the human sense, only the conceivable is possible, and an existence such as the blessed should lead seems conceivable only upon a lonely isle in the sea. In perfect seclusion extravagant wishes cannot live; there, nothing happens which could become history, there time means nothing any more. Earthbound man, especially the Greek with his indomitable creative desire, would pine away in such a place; but to the blessed, who have escaped both desires and time, it would signify paradise.

Life in Hawaii involuntarily assumes the nature of a myth. The European, the essentially historical being, seems out of place here like a crawling fly on a water-colour drawing. The Hawaiian, however, who fits into the picture, appears strangely unreal; or real, rather, in the sense of dream-experience. There is hardly a difference between that which I see with my eyes and what I read in the old heroic sagas. These men resemble exactly those who live only in mythology: warm-hearted and careless, light-minded and good, frittering away their life from feast to feast; and at the same time terrible in war, cruel and merciless, once it comes to fighting. They live, on the one hand, on that which tree and shrub provide them with gratuitously, harmless like butterflies; on the other hand, they are cannibals, or were cannibals, at any rate, a hundred years ago. The gods of Olympus were not different. King Kamehameha, the Alexander of the South Seas, whose deeds are exalted in a thousand songs, was a ruler like Zeus, great, violent, cruel, and at the same time good and harmless, light-hearted, on the whole irresponsible as a child. The battles which took place under his leadership—combats of the bloodiest kind, in which whole tribes perished—were nevertheless intended more as tournaments than as real battles; or as battles such as the gods fought among each other before Troy. These

men of flesh and blood treated death with no more seriousness than the Olympians.

This is what the first men should have been like, according to the unanimous report of all mythology. It is, of course, impossible that they were really like that, but it seems highly significant to me that this is the nature which fiction has attributed to them without exception. The first men were not primitive, but the children of the gods, and this means that they were simultaneously more and less than we human beings are. That the gods—or, more precisely, those gods who were divinities after the manner of the Olympians—were simultaneously more as well as less than we are, appears from all the myths. But the Indians alone have known how to show in what this plus and this minus consists: of the three elements, satwa, rajas and tamas, which are said to compose the world, the second, rajas, energy, falls in excess to the lot of the gods, whereas they entirely lack the third, inertia. Since, however, there is no inertia, since power meets with no resistance, the gods are, with all the advantages which complete lack of limitation bestows, limited in a twofold sense: they are superficial, irresponsible, since no action touches their inner being, no matter what its effects are in other spheres; and they are incapable of growing beyond their divinity. Whereas man, precisely by virtue of the spirit of gravity, can wrestle his way through to enlightenment (the predominance of Satwa), the god only succeeds in this if he is born again as the son of man, and if he takes advantage of the opportunities of this condition. I cannot conceive a better definition of the concept of a Nature-God; it is precisely in the Indian sense that such a god is really less than man. And primordial man, the child of the gods, is, in precisely the same sense, more and also less than we are. We, however, notice, above all, the ways in which they are 'more,' which is what always happens when an actual condition is compared with an imagined one; for this reason, the primordial mythical state strikes us as ideal. We long for freedom from all limitations, for irresponsibility, no matter what price we would have to pay for it, simply because our life is nothing else but responsibility. Thus, even I have actually caught myself in the act of admiring Hawaiians. It

seems to me to be only superhuman, not subhuman, to be able to live so like the gods.

I wrote this late at night, after returning from a Hawaiian banquet. It was wild and simultaneously full of lyric charm. A bard chanted ancient sagas with a strangely affecting voice, while the guests, gathered round a single dish, tore fishes to pieces with their hands like beasts, and feather-bedecked dancers swayed their hips in fantastic curves without letting the upper portion of their bodies and their heads betray even the slightest motion.

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THIS is no doubt the island of the blessed. Day after day the sun shines, giving life to mountain and valley alike. Evening upon evening, cool breezes play in the tops of the coco palms. Year in, year out, the trees and shrubs are in bloom and the trees become laden with fruit. And above all the ocean belongs entirely to the world of the immortals. The breakers roll up thunderingly and threateningly, and yet man plays with them, as if they were nothing but foam. Out there by the reefs they are so enormous that they might frighten a whale. But the eternally cheerful Hawaiians are not afraid: they make use of the waves as if they were riding animals, they chase towards the shore upon them, balancing and vaulting along the crests, like Tritons in an idyll of the sea.

Are these handsome brown men, who feel as much at home in the ocean as fishes do, men like ourselves? Probably not quite; each element develops special beings. Man as a rider or as a diver, as an inhabitant of the desert and the mountain, is every time a different creature. Among men living upon the water I have so far only known its conqueror, that is to say, the land animal which has subjugated water through cunning; the genuinely amphibious human being can be found to-day only in the South Seas. But here he is so perfect in his way that he seems superhuman for this very reason. The Hawaiian who acts as my guide on the ocean is fair as a god, of gigantic stature, and a famous shark fighter; he is said to have put out with his spear the eyes of every shark whom he has met. At the same time, he is gentle and mild, and in the evening, when

the coco palms sigh in the wind, he sings melancholy tunes to himself. Once more my thoughts roam over to distant Greece. With what marvellous certainty did the Greek imagination create! What nature has manifested in the South Seas is the mirrored reflection of the Greek ideal. Never upon earth have gods more probable, more capable of life, been invented than those of Greece.

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THIS could hardly have happened otherwise. The Elysian fields are the realm of subjectivity; here the mood of the moment creates reality and transforms all reality into moods; here the world changes instantaneously into what the whims of the hour imagine it to be. What usually only flashes like a meteor through my consciousness now abides in it; caprices agglomerate, light wishes become profound, a star is being condensed out of the uncertain mists. Thus, in the midst of the play of waves, in the paradise of the palm groves and the gigantic purple flowers, love has been born in me.

Does this mean something serious, something real? How am I to know? The boundary line between reality and the creations of fancy cannot be drawn with certainty anywhere. How often has reality faded into a dream for me, and again, how often has a dream become reality! How often have I consciously imposed fiction upon life by relating indifferent human beings to fictitious combinations: as long as these resisted the process the former were highly significant for me. And how often has a situation sufficed to awaken a feeling in me, which disappeared as soon as its stimulus had gone! It is never really different. A passion whose fundamental motive is wild desire, is no deeper and possesses no surer ground than a caprice of the intellect; here, too, the emotion depends upon external circumstances, and evanesces when they have become changed. Essentially psychic reality and imagination can hardly be discerned from each other; the deciding factor is, where the centre of man's consciousness actually rests. If he identifies himself with his natural instincts, then of course he *is* his passions; if he identifies himself with some fiction, then this is supreme reality to him if his consciousness is rooted essen-

tially in racial ties, then the family is his real ego. In order that love can imply absolute reality at all, man must feel himself unconditionally identical with his personality. I can no longer do this. It does happen at rhythmic intervals that certain instincts gain the upper hand and a secondary centre constitutes itself as the focus of my being. But this condition does not endure; once the period is completed my consciousness assumes its normal position again. From this, however, my person appears to me as 'outer world' and I cannot treat it more seriously than any other external circumstances with which I have to reckon. . . .

For the time being, I tarry in the realm of subjectivity. Then the love which was within this realm will more than ever prove to be fancy; it probably has no objective background whatsoever. And yet, as long as the moment in which it rules me lasts, it seems real enough to me. Once again I experience that strange condition in which the universe appears to be completely determined by a few personal co-ordinates, once more I am overcome by that uncertainty which, I imagine, seizes every man who suddenly finds himself floating on the sea of feelings—an element which, in contrast to woman, is by nature so very unfamiliar to him. And yet I know, in the midst of being adrift, that I could never be drowned in this sea. In these mythical surroundings all life assumes a mythical nature. Nereids and Tritons are not strangers to love, but what men take seriously is a game to them; their love lacks the element of inertia, the earthly fetters, it implies no thraldom in the German sense of 'Gemüt.' It is just the same as that love which to-day controls my heart and soul and senses. At this moment it transfigures the world for me; but I doubt if I would suffer it if its object suddenly ceased to exist. . . .

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TOWARDS AMERICA

No time must be lost now: before I reach California I must have disentangled my soul from all its links to the East; otherwise, impure tones will resound in me, just as if a chord,

beautiful in itself, were drawn over by a foot pedal into a melody in another key. I must rally all my forces, for this transposition will not be easy. Not only do I feel no longing for America—I dread this country, I have a horror of it. But personal inclinations and disinclinations are never to be taken seriously; they only prove the limitations of him who possesses them. Without doubt the United States are worth seeing, possibilities are realised there which exist nowhere else, and it is only worth while to tarry with the positive side of things.

If, on the other hand, I land in San Francisco in a negative and unsympathetic mood, then I will not become aware of the positive elements, nor will I be able to absorb myself in the spirit of the country. It is not possible without loving surrender to understand anything at all; as long as the slightest inclination to criticism remains in the centre of consciousness, it is hopeless to do justice to what is strange. How am I to manage to change my attitude fundamentally in the course of a brief week? I must undertake something like a psychological analysis; discover what the real cause of my personal feelings is. When I have found this out, and thereby the insufficiency of my aversion—for there is nothing which could objectively justify subjective contrariness—then I will no doubt be master of my undesirable mood.

When I consider the matter carefully, I find that my antipathy is not directed to the American element as such, but to that of the Westerner in general; and only against the Americans in so far as they are the most extreme expression of the Westerner. We Europeans imagine ourselves to be divided from the Americans by more than the ocean: therefore, the knowledge that the Asiatic recognises a difference only in so far as Americans appear to them as the most typical Europeans was all the more instructive to me; in his view, they embody no different spirit from ours, but the same in a more explicit form. Undoubtedly he is right; the essential qualities of a people from the point of view of its distinguishing elements, are always recognised best by the foreigner. I must therefore presuppose that it is the nature of the Westerner which I dislike in the appearance of Americanism.

What is this nature, as differentiated from that of the Asiatic? The usual catchwords of the materialistic West, as opposed to the spiritualistic East, of our lack of dignity, hastiness and greed, as opposed to the superiority to the world, the dignity and calm of the Oriental, of our quest for action as opposed to their depth of recognition—these are not commensurate with the problem. Even the most justified objection against our nature is refuted by pointing to the fact that our idealism is undoubtedly the greater, and for this reason everything which does not exist in us may yet come to pass. It may easily happen that the materialism of our age will one day be looked back upon as a profitable stage upon the way to spiritualisation, for the material embodies an ideal to the Westerner and therefore draws him upward, whether he will or not. The fact that he expends greater attention upon the means to life than upon life itself does not differentiate him essentially from the Oriental. We too long ultimately for the one thing which is needful; this longing is becoming increasingly the dominant factor in our strife, only we wish to perfect appearance over and above this, and if this determination appears in the foreground at the moment, it is due to the fact that man cannot pursue two aims simultaneously with equal energy. In any case it is a mistake to reproach us with our endeavour to perfect the world of appearances: on the contrary, our superiority rests upon this attempt, for the Eastern proceeding of turning away from it for the sake of its significance is poor in comparison with ours, which wishes to express all significance in appearance. It is true that we have not yet realised our ideal, but we are sure to realise it one day, for we are moving directly towards it. No, the circumstances described by the usual catchphrases do not determine my antipathy; of this I am sure, for the efficiency of our civilisation has never struck me as a negative factor. Of noise and bustle there is more than a sufficiency even in the East; but in the West they lead to more.

We are obviously concerned with something else; and this something else, which really determines my aversion, is, if I judge correctly, the circumstance that all forms have become fluid in the Westerner; this must be it, for I feel no disinclina-

tion towards those who, as individuals or types of classes, represent a perfect manifestation. The opposition between East and West with which I am concerned in these observations only dates from the time when we began to proceed upon our rapid march, or, expressed more precisely, it has only existed at those periods during which we were in a state of rapid transition. In idea this condition has always existed: in principle the West has always been mobile, intent upon new creations and new manifestations; the East has always inclined towards a static state of equilibrium, just as, from the point of view of the Greek Orthodox Church, Catholicism and Protestantism appear as the children of one spirit (the Reformation, with its consequences, seemed in its eyes only the ultimate expression of that instinct for renewal and change which has characterised the Western Church from the beginning), so it is surely possible to prove the seed of the opposition which exists to-day between the East and the West everywhere and at all times. But this seed has only matured lately. Between the days of our classical antiquity and the flourishing periods of Eastern culture, between the France of the seventeenth century, and China, of, say, the Sung Dynasty, there was only a difference in appearance, not in being, as far as actuality is concerned; even in the West the static ideal has predominated until the beginning of the recent era, even in ancient Greece and in Italy of the Renaissance; for life there, no matter how full of restless movement it was, was gauged by values whose validity was independent of time. If we modern Europeans regard East and West as a fundamental opposition, we do not in fact oppose the East so much to the West as the classical and mediæval ideal to that of modernity, which is essentially Protestant; and this means that we oppose the ideal of perfection to that of progress. Thus I would appear to have found the key to the problem. I prefer Orientalism to Occidentalism because I value perfection in any form higher than success.

In modern man, and first and foremost in the Americans, all forms have become fluid. In the new world, the time-honoured differences between classes and types no longer apply; what used to be something final appears, where it exists to-day

at all, merely as a step, on which every one can ascend or descend. Thus, forms of life have become parts played on the stage. A theatrical part, however, possesses no formative power; one assumes or discards it like a garment; one cannot take it quite seriously. This ironic relation to formation would represent a highest ideal if the profoundest consciousness of being went hand in hand with it, and the emphasis of life were laid upon it. In the case of modern man the emphasis lies on something else: it lies on the changing of parts in itself, on getting on in the world. For this reason he does not represent a higher kind of man.

Every now and again I have met minds who saw the chief objection against modernity in the fact that it prefers quantity to quality; that it recognises no kind of boundaries, whereas personal limitation in some form or other is the fundamental condition of all embodiment of values. This objection, of course, is brought forward rightly; what I have said myself is essentially the same in meaning. But the description which regards quantity and quality as quasi-eternal and opposites falsifies the truth. The fact that modern man appears insatiable does not imply a misfortune, because even this ἄπειρον will inevitably find its limits at some juncture, which will automatically bring about self-limitation; and in the meantime the quantitative standard will rise. The tendency to the purely quantitative is a temporary phenomenon, and will probably translate itself of its own accord from external as well as internal causes, into other tendencies as soon as new humanity has its years of indiscretion behind it. It proves lack of imagination to perceive a catastrophe in the transgression of the time-honoured boundaries, for not one of them embodies an ideal in itself. In themselves they all are disadvantages; the further they are removed the better. What is really serious is that our age confuses perfection and success; that it does not deny the old values, but that it imagines that it is realising the same values on a higher level than any earlier epoch; that it regards its condition not as temporary but as ideal. This circumstance causes the inferiority of its representatives.

Nature realises and perfects itself in manifestation. Where

it is not yet manifested, that is to say in a preliminary condition, there being is not revealed in its purity: hence the immaturity of the Westerner compared with the Oriental. But the most immature young colt, where he does not wish to be anything but a colt, may seem very lovable; he appears repugnant only where he pretends to be a complete human being, and this is what characterises the Americans. In Europe it is being understood more and more that the fluid condition, in which men happen to be, is only not an evil when it means a transitional stage, and Europeans therefore strive beyond fluidity, for the examples of a higher kind of humanity are not far away. The American only guesses in exceptional cases that there is anything higher than progress. It is for this reason that he seems more barbaric than any one else.

I would thus appear to have determined why I do not favour Occidentalism, and I cannot disapprove my feelings. At the same time, I have found the starting-point from which I ought to be able to change my negative attitude into a positive one.

In China I had arrived at the conclusion that the Chinese were at a higher cultural, but upon a lower natural level than we are; that the higher degree of perfection in them went hand in hand with a lower degree of progressiveness. From this it follows that if, from our natural level, we attain the same degree of perfection as the Chinese, we would be altogether their superiors, and this would justify the transitional condition. The road to a new form from a completed one leads only through formlessness, and from one perfection to another only through insufficiency. Modern Europe has broken the old forms. In so doing it renounced for a long period the possibility of appearing perfect; it has fallen back into barbarism, in the midst of which it still is, and into which it will penetrate presumably ever further for a long time; from the point of view of perfection, there is certainly no progress among us. But equally certainly, we are progressing from the point of view of natural evolution, and this places possibilities for accomplishment into the world, which are not innate in the great peoples of the East. These possibilities are still so far

from realisation that only the embryologist can predetermine them with any certainty; what is revealed to our vision to-day is ugly on the whole. But our condition promises much: no man capable of insight can deny it. From this point of view I will henceforth face Westernism.

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IF I am not mistaken, it was in Adyar that I discussed at length the general relation between the desires for perfection and for progress. I then laid the main stress on the fact that ambition to advance biologically leads directly away from possible perfection, that a desire for perfection, conversely, indirectly facilitates progress. But these simple considerations do not exhaust the question; the connection between both tendencies of evolution is manifold and complex. To-day I want to attain clarity concerning the most curious relations which I am able to recognise in them.

If I compare the accomplished cultures of the East with our growing ones, I find that the inner man is incomparably more cultured within the former, but that in the latter that which distinguishes the highest subjectivity in the East seems to have been externalised into an objective power. I do not believe that any not very highly gifted Christian knows how to love as profoundly as an Indian Bhakta, feels as humanely as the typical Buddhist, or has saturated his soul with such moral feeling as a distinguished Confucian; on the other hand, among us, love, morality and humanity have become objective powers, and this cannot be said of them in the East. Whereas in our case even the man who is inwardly coarse is forced, to a certain degree, to act according to the highest ideals, nothing compels the Asiatic to appear cultured where he is not, and for this reason the behaviour in practice of the average man in the East leaves more to be desired than that of the same class in the West. On the whole, we act better than we are.

We have run ahead of our being by our institutions. Our intellect has recognised as desirable for every one what only a saint would strive after from inner and personal stimulus, and it has invented a machinery which secures the realisation of

what is desirable automatically. The disadvantages of this method are obvious: the possibility of realising what is good externally makes us superficial, for, where this opportunity exists, man grows accustomed to expect all salvation from external circumstances, and neglects his inner culture correspondingly. But our method also has very great advantages, and I wish to tarry in their contemplation to-day, being concerned with awakening a sympathetic attitude towards the West. Every soul is capable of manifold formation, is developed differently according to which of its component parts gains predominance, and the form which it finally assumes depends to a high degree upon the surroundings in which it develops—just as, in savage times, most people become savage, because all opportunities are favourable to the brute in them, so the best gains the upper hand in most people in favourable circumstances; for this reason it is fortunate if external circumstances are as propitious as possible. It is undoubtedly possible to influence inner faculties externally; in fact, in the case of beings incapable of insight, this is the only way to make them participate in the highest. The ancient cultures demanded accordingly that the immature should show blind obedience to the men of knowledge, and it was surely much better to subject the mass to this tutelage rather than to leave them to their own devices, all the more so as they did not know of a third possibility. Our civilisation has called such a third possibility into life: within the sphere of modern organisation of external life, goodness proves itself to be more and more profitable; appreciation of his own advantage makes even the blackguard reliable in business to-day. The bluntest mind is being forced by experience to the recognition that in our world it is better in the long run to behave in accordance with our ideals. No matter if this condition is induced by the most brutal utilitarianism, the ideal demands have the effect of positive forces, and they form the soul in such a way that an average modern individual who has grown up in not altogether adverse circumstances involuntarily thinks more humanely and more justly than his forbears. Now a natural evolution of humanity in the moral sense demonstrably does

not take place; their inherited moral temperament is on the whole just the same as it was thousands of years ago; all ethical progress of the masses is due to spiritual influences which, as such, concern only the individual, and which, seen from the angle of physiology, come from outside. For this reason, the success conditioned by our system, by which the spiritually immature individual, no matter for what reason, professes virtue by his own incentive, represents an exceedingly important phenomenon.

Thus an inner force is awakened in him which strives voluntarily in the direction in which external pressure directs him, and in this way the general level rises slowly but irresistibly. According to the Oriental system, the man who is born immature must remain so; and no matter how high the condition of the mature, a process of growth seems impossible for the masses; humanity as a whole remains upon its original level of existence. Within our system the possibility exists that precisely the mass may attain to the position where hitherto only men born in favourable circumstances used to stand; and this possibility has been created by the very fact that external circumstances suggest to the immature to emulate what is good by their own initiative, so that spiritual powers can now lead him upwards beyond the limits of his inherited nature. Thanks to this fact, an extraordinarily high percentage of white men born on a low level have risen to a height during one century, a height such as the Shastras make the Indian Cudra hope for only after thousands of years of restless struggle through innumerable reincarnations.

This shows very clearly in what sense the desire for progress really does benefit perfection. No doubt perfection cannot be reached by this path. The barbarity of modern man is explained by this. But the striving after progress within a cultural system in which the highest ideals operate as objective forces, helps more and more people to attain to the natural level on which in India the Brahmin stands alone. He too is not born as a perfect individual; his advantage consists in his better heritage, which makes it possible for him to strive directly without deviation towards the highest earthly ideal;

our cultural system may one day develop so far that all men will start life as Brahmins.

This must be placed to the credit of the ideal of equality, no matter how much in other ways it lowers humanity and makes it superficial. If the present condition represented a final stage, then it would have to be opposed by all means; the levelling downwards which democracy inevitably effects, brings with it an enormous lowering of the value of humanity, and the continuation of this process would spell ruin. However, it will not continue; democracy only signifies a working hypothesis, which will disappear of its own accord when the time is ripe. As soon as the general level has been raised sufficiently, new layers will arise, new mountains will be piled up, new valleys will be hollowed out; only the new aristocracy will be based upon a higher level than the old one was, whose qualities will now have become the inheritance of the masses.

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IN fact, there is a great deal of good in democracy; every outlook based upon the idea of evolution tends to produce optimistic men, and nothing accelerates success as much as self-confidence. What differentiates modern evolution from all its previous forms is the briefness of the period of time it requires to achieve evolutionary power. The old Indian philosophy, which teaches, just as modern democracy does, that every one is capable in principle of the highest, and that the castes are only stages on the path of progress, limited this magna charta of freedom, declaring that every given life must remain within its inherited confines and that the boundaries of caste can only be escaped from life to life through the transitionary stage of death; in the same way, every aristocrat who is not altogether a fool will allow that a rise to a higher level does take place in families, so that it would be unjust to deny to the most advanced acceptance into his social community—but at the same time he will abide by his belief that at least three generations are required in order to produce a gentleman. Modern democracy, however, asserts that this process can be fulfilled in the course of one life.

It is certain, on the one hand, that such rapid growth is not salutary; very few people can stand being transplanted from a narrow into a wide frame; if it were otherwise, then modern Europeans and Americans would seem less crude. On the other hand, however, the democratic belief strengthens optimism so immensely that it develops into an elemental power, whose virtue makes the apparently impossible possible. It brings about what even to-day is not infrequently ascribed to the 'original equality of all men,' that the old barriers, erected by birth, seem really less justified than heretofore; thanks to this power, it is actually true that the process of evolution may be abbreviated. And if at first only the disadvantages of the liquefaction of the old forms strike one, one should remember that this state of affairs will be altered after a short period; in advanced countries there will ere long be no very low layers of the people at all; every one will be schooled and even cultured to a certain degree. And if this event has only seen one generation pass, then upstarts in the old sense will no longer exist, for no one will any longer be quite unprepared for a higher position in life. The democratic ideal brings about a spiritual rise of the lower strata of the people; according to the system of cross-breeding, they will very soon have been ennobled on a large scale. And once this has been attained, then the belief in equality will pass away of its own accord, and the basis will have been found for the aristocratic order of the future.

Among the sages of ancient India the power of enjoyment was regarded as one of the essential qualities which a youth had to possess in order to be regarded as worthy of acceptance as a Chela. This is only another expression for having an optimistic temperament. He who seemed suited for acceptance was pointed the way along which to advance as far in the course of one single life as he would otherwise only have done in thousands of years by passing through many incarnations; even the Indian philosophy thus admits the possibility of abbreviated evolution. But it affirms this possibility only for one in a million; democratic philosophy presupposes it for every one. This seems bold. But when one remembers how

low the highest ideal is which democracy has developed hitherto, compared with the Indian ideals, then one feels inclined to agree. This ideal might perhaps be achieved by every one. And once they have attained to it, then higher ideals will rise upon their mental horizon of their own accord.

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WHERE more than ten Americans are gathered together, one may be certain that one will be a crank, an original person of the eccentric kind. Even on this steamer I have discovered one: a missionary whose speciality is the belief in demons. He is said to have seen in China how the spirits of dead girls took possession of others, and how baptism alone can prevent this calamity; on the strength of this idea, and the conclusions he has drawn from it, he has travelled about ever since. While, in a sympathetic mood, I was thinking about this phenomenon, I remembered that I had never once met a crank amongst Asiatics. The fakir, regarded externally, might well be taken for an eccentric: but his kind is quite impersonal; he pursues an eccentric system without being eccentric himself in the very least. The specifically individual note is lacking.

This note predominates among us; all the more the more typically Western we are. And the crank flourishes among us in the same proportion. The striving for individualisation cannot lead to valuable results among average men; they only become eccentric when they wish to be 'themselves,' and appear less accomplished than any types, be they ever so limited, because tradition is always wiser than the mediocre individual. But, on the other hand, really great innovators can only arise where every one wants to be 'himself,' where the legitimacy of this aspiration is presupposed; in old China an Edison would have been inconceivable. The same circumstances which favour the caricature of the eccentric also benefit the genius. Regarded superficially, he too is a crank. The struggle to be different is the necessary presupposition of all inventive originality.

Therefore, we must probably acquiesce in the fact that we have to purchase our higher originality in individual cases at

the expense of a greater imperfection of the average. Every innovation *qua* innovation is inimical to culture in so far as culture signifies the having-turned-to-flesh of a given spirit, and the individual in process of formation has not yet attained this condition. The struggle for innovation, moreover, makes people superficial; the man whose attention is pinned to the transformation of appearance easily loses contact with his depth. The more inventive we are, the more superficial we become, and if we should continue in this evolutionary direction we might come to a bad end. But I cannot believe that this process will continue for long. I am convinced, on the contrary, that our loss of profundity has the same meaning as money put into the improvement of a farm without showing returns to begin with: the temporary loss really means investment. New organs are developed in us at enormous expense; where heretofore the group was the bearer of all cultural thought, the individual is to take on this rôle henceforth. This reorganisation brings about a temporary renunciation of the harvests which were secured by the old order. But, once the new organisation is in full swing, then the farm will probably yield ten times more. White humanity will hardly consist of nothing but Edisons in the future, but in all probability the number of cranks will continually decrease and make way for a new type, which, on the one hand, is as genuine as the old-class type, and which, on the other, will appear as self-determined as the most extreme modern individualist. Only the superficial individual professes individualism, the profound one directly feels his relationship with the whole. Thus, the future will seemingly lead to a re-establishment of the old order. The eccentrics will be reduced, the average individuals will seem more balanced. And yet it will be an entirely new state of affairs: every one will be an individuality. Then individual form will make the same profundity possible for the mass that hitherto only the typical form has done.

I am writing in these days as if I were an evolutionist, as if I believed as firmly in progress as a Yankee. This is really so in so far as Westerners are concerned, and so far as there can be any question of progress at all. It seems certain that our

concept of progress is not adapted to the processes of nature, and this consideration disposes of Spencer's theory. Not only do plants and animals remain the same by their own virtue through æons of time and change only in reaction to a transient outer world: the same thing is also true of human beings everywhere where no physiological 'beyond' controls their lives; thus, Russian history from the fifteenth century until yesterday, surveyed from the point of view of man and his motives, shows nothing but repetitions. But the theory of evolution would never have found so much support if it were not in accordance with the intellect. Intellect is essentially purposeful, necessarily progressive; it is never at rest, it is incapable of contenting itself, every piece of knowledge attained points to new recognitions, which lead straight away towards the ideal. Therefore, where intellect dominates life, life must progress according to the laws of the intellect. We Westerners have pledged ourselves completely to intellect; our peculiar nature makes it possible for us to follow its peculiar momentum to a high degree, intellectual ideals are our aim; we therefore really become changed in accordance with the postulates of progress. To what extent this will take place remains to be seen; physical nature is in itself conservatively minded and may set insurmountable barriers to the demands of the mind. Nevertheless, indefinite progress is conceivable, and as the contents of a faith are real forces, and since ideals are extremely potent centres of gravitation, the future of white humanity may yet bring fulfilment with it which the present has never promised.

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I CANNOT become friendly with the missionaries in spite of the best intentions. There are no doubt great and noble men in this profession, but they are sown sparsely and they then fulfil it correspondingly badly: they never really want to 'convert.' It is and remains a limitation to impose one's opinion upon others, and this is proved clearly enough, in practice, by the fact that all genuine missionaries are narrow-minded. Here on board I have conversed with several of them who have lived

for years in China: they have actually managed to notice nothing of the advantages of Confucianism! Such blindness is truly a dispensation of Providence; it can only be explained by supernatural means. The Christian, and especially the Protestant missionaries are, with negligible exceptions, lacking in understanding, mean and crude of soul. To what a lamentably small extent applies to them what is true of the apostles of Bahai, to whom Baha'u'llah, their messiah, gave the noble instruction: 'O children of Baha! Have intercourse with all the peoples of the world, with the disciples of all religions in the spirit of complete joyfulness. Remind them of what is good for them all, but beware of making the Word of God the stumbling-block of friction or the source of mutual hatred. If ye know what the other does not know, tell him with the tongue of friendliness and love. If he accepts it and takes it up, then the aim has been attained; if he rejects it, pray for him and leave him to himself; ye may never importune him. . . .'

The missionaries at the beginning of our era were probably not much better. And when I think of this and the higher developments which they have brought about nevertheless, then my attitude to those of to-day becomes more mild. Of course, it is a misfortune that they visit India and China, for the inhabitants of these countries are in part mentally, in part morally, and in part spiritually too high above those who come to instruct them for them to exercise any advantageous effect. But they might go to more primitive peoples: they will be as useful to them as their predecessors were to our barbaric ancestors. In fact, they will prove themselves to be more useful to them than the revelation of more profound wisdom could be, because an unique formative power is undoubtedly inherent in Christianity; it is the only spiritual religion which possesses such power. And it possesses it, apparently, quite independently of the quality of those who proclaim it, and independently of the mental value of its dogma; for this value is, compared with that of Brahmanism and that of both forms of Buddhism, very small. In fact, it has constantly decreased in the course of centuries, for if the earliest fathers of the

Church possessed spiritual insight, this is true to a small extent even of Luther and Calvin, and not at all of those artisans and workmen who appeared in America as the founders of religion. But almost in the same proportion as the mental value of Christianity waned, its practical value, its efficacy, has increased. It cannot be denied that Protestantism forms men of greater idealism than Catholicism, and that the dogmatism of the American sects, however preposterous it is, has developed the spirit of Christianity in its disciples into a power such as it has never been hitherto. How is this to be understood? In the sense described above, that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of practical work, for which reason it does not matter too much to what dogmatic concept it appears to be related at a given time.

From this angle alone is it possible to do justice to Christianity. It is not true that the teachings of Jesus Christ represent a maximum in philosophical profundity; even the Gospel of St. John seems inadequate compared with that of the Bhagavad-Gita. In the teachings of Sri Krishna and the Mahayana religion the fundamental ideas of the Saviour of the West are revealed in a profounder setting; they seem, moreover, to be related to a general whole of which Christ Himself remained unaware, and which nevertheless really gives them their peculiar meaning. From the point of view of metaphysical recognition, traditional or literal Christianity appears as something altogether temporary. But it is not a religion of recognition at all, but a religion of practical action, and as such it surpasses all others. As I have written already: among Christian peoples alone the ideas of love, compassion, humanity have become objective forces, and this means that even the most imperfectly recognised metaphysical reality has been realised in appearance better through Christianity than through any other faith. Its founders were perhaps men with superficial powers of recognition, they were certainly more profound as men of action than Krishna and Acvagosha; yet, in so far as both meant to fashion appearance, the Christians were the more profound in the absolute sense, for in the sphere of actual life the best version of an idea is the one which stands the prag-

matic test best—no matter to what an extent it satisfies the mind. This is the meaning of that superiority of Christianity which history has proved, however much the one-sided intelligentsia may doubt it.

And this at the same time justifies Christian missions. The narrow-minded men who journey forth to impose their irrelevant opinions upon other people yet proclaim a real gospel through their being: the gospel of work and creative action. They give an example of a high spirit of sacrifice, untiring initiative, unshakable consistency, of the firm determination to help to victory what is good. For this is the essential quality of Western culture, that it will not allow anything to be regarded as unchangeable. We think it possible to transform the world from its very foundations, to embody our highest ideals in reality. This spirit of joyful militancy, of courage and optimism is alien to the East; the East is too sceptical of human power, it knows too much . . . Or has it perhaps overlooked something important? Have I, in my observations hitherto, laid the emphasis upon the wrong place? . . . The first American seagulls fly towards us. The psychic watershed has been passed, I am drawn irresistibly back into the Western feeling and mode and form of life. And now I recognise that the practical superiority of Christianity is the expression of an absolute metaphysical advantage: it embodies, as no other religion does, the spirit of freedom. Man, conditioned by nature, can show himself free only in two ways: by saying yes inwardly to all events, and by taking the initiative in directing them. Accordingly, two commandments sum up Christian ethics: that every one should take his cross upon himself, and that every one should fearlessly fight for the victory of good in a spirit of ready sacrifice. These two commandments really induce a life of freedom in every one. If the Indians, the profoundest of all thinkers, fail in practical life, this is due to the fact that they do not know how to impress their free being upon appearance. Instead of taking up their cross, they think of its insubstantiality, which releases them just as little as the denial of an undesirable relationship removes the relation; instead of letting the recognition of their essential unity with

Brahma, who wishes to manifest himself more and more fully in this world, develop into action by displaying initiative everywhere in accordance with the Divine will, they merely watch how God helps Himself. We know nothing like as much as they do; but the teaching of Christ induces us to live unconsciously according to their knowledge. Thus we are more destined to action than they are. We are the hands of God. These hands, as hands, are blind, and their blindness has caused much mischief. But if one day they are guided by the spirit of recognition, it is they who will, in so far as it is possible at all, succeed in founding the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

PART EIGHT: AMERICA

61

SAN FRANCISCO

BACK once more in the West. What a good thing that I am seeing the Far West first! This world is Occidental to so extreme a degree that the inner transposition which is necessary to enter into it represses the pictures of the East of its own accord. Thus I find myself instantaneously lifted out of the unhappy transitional condition in which consciousness is overpopulated by an unclean mixture of the old and the new.

On the first day, in the belief that I still clung to the past, I took tea in the delightful Japanese tea-house which offers rest to the traveller at the Golden Gate. What was the first idea that entered my mind there? That the dwarfed trees longed to grow into giants! I never had such thoughts in Japan; they would have been opposed to its spirit. Thus, I had already lost my inner attachment to the East on the very first day. The air of California must possess an immense formative power. I observe what is going on in me: it is a real metamorphosis. The consciousness of being recedes; that of 'becoming' increases; and those imperatives which reflect the objective tendencies of nature everywhere in the subjective sphere are already stepping into the foreground: one should grow, should increase, should advance; evidently this feeling of what one ought to do was at the basis of my impressions which spoke to me of the altogether improbable desire for growth of the Japanese dwarf trees. And this reminds me that I never felt I 'should' anything in the East. Would Kant, would Fichte have been possible in the East? I do not think so. Where the consciousness of being predominates, there longing to create is unknown; there homunculus feelings cannot develop; there it seems unnecessary to command: 'Become what thou art.' The actual state of things is the same there, in principle, as here, but man assumes a different attitude to it. The evil-doer in the East knows no feeling of sinfulness, the man who strives still has patience; he who longs fervently for perfection, no matter how conscious he is of his present insufficiency, only

rarely feels the inner impulse to cut short evolution. They say the Orientals have time. The truth is that they lack the consciousness of time; for this reason the problems of being arise for them independently of its temporal actualisation. No Chela would stand waiting a generation at his Guru's to discover whether the hour of enlightenment would come, if time were a reality to him; where his consciousness is fixed upon appearance at all, as, for instance, in the condition of being in love, the Hindu is no more patient than we are. What is typical of the Indian is that he is conscious of his real being as such in the normal course of events, so that the sinner can regard himself essentially as a saint, the beginner as perfected, the fool as wise, and for this reason he sees no necessity to express being in becoming. For this reason neither the Indian nor the Chinese sages have given commandments in our sense. They have said: if you do that you will become perfect; if you are like that, then you have attained to your goal; if you commit this error, then your development will be arrested. They never said: you should do this. The East does not know the meaning of 'should,' because it 'is'; we who are in a constant transition of growth, see 'being' before us in the form of what we 'should.'

How strange that I 'should' do anything again! Now new values are becoming decisive: performance will decide the value of being, success that of volition. Now appearance acquires absolute significance, since the absolute is to find expression in it. The conditions of existence no longer represent events of equal value; now the rich man is more than the poor, the strong more than the weak, the wise more than the fool. It is no longer a question of filling a given position but of wrestling for the best conceivable one. Which form of existence is to be preferred, the Eastern or the Western? May I still judge? I am already no longer unbiased. Already I want to grow, to become, to create, perform, perfect again, already volition in itself fills my consciousness to such an extent that I find it difficult to become absorbed in another kind of existence. But this much seems unchallengeable: *for this world* the West has chosen the better part. In order to enforce what

is right (which applies in idea eternally), power is needed, for in itself it is powerless; unless represented by material means even the truest ideas remain non-existent; however much the Eastern modality of life benefits the man of recognition, the Western modality is better, for purposes of translating recognition into action. From the point of view of this world, it is mere illusion, if a sinner regards himself as a saint—he must *become* saintly, change his appearance, if he wishes to realise his being here. 'Becoming' is only controlled by the man who takes things seriously, who identifies himself consciously with its phases; only he can quicken it who directs his will firmly towards the goal, and this, again, is given only to him who somehow or other sees it in the form of something which he 'should' do before him. The Indians, at home in the world of ideas, have merely allowed themselves to be driven by the stream of events. We know how to guide it.

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IN THE YOSEMITE VALLEY

I HAVE not really escaped from the East as yet: it forms the background of my Westerner's life, thanks to which it throws it into a relief which would otherwise be lacking. Therefore I do not regard it as a matter of course, I find it noticeable that my self-consciousness gets compressed more and more within the limits of my person. The scenery which surrounds me is magnificent; in a similar landscape in India or in China I would have lost my ego long ago in the universe. I would feel myself weighted down by the rocks, which embrace the alluvial soil of the Yosemite within its steep walls; I would experience myself as the soul of the waterfalls, whose liquid masses reach the valley, after a descent of many hundred feet, as delicate spray; I would strive towards heaven in each fir-tree. Here I am not at one as a matter of course with what surrounds me. I differentiate between myself and the rocks, I see the waterfalls outside myself, the spirit of the forest means a Thou to me. And if I become absorbed intentionally into that which

essentially belongs to me, then it seems as if I conquered it. My world-feeling is expressed in the form of an impulse for empirical expansion. I can no longer enter into nature without taking my ego along with me; its structure seems to have become too dense to be dissolved in it as spirit.

Accordingly, my consciousness of existence appears enhanced. The force which, a little while ago, was able to fill universal space is now condensed into the confines of my individuality. In the process its energy acquires a degree of strength which I never experienced in India. I am originally not at one with the world round about me—but what should prevent me from becoming so? Why should I not conquer the heavens and capture the earth? It seems to me as if I could do everything I wanted, and I feel impelled to prove it. This, then, is the meaning of Western conquest! We place the problem within the limits of time and space which the Indians attempt to solve independently of them, but it is the same problem none the less! Nor do I feel as though I had become more superficial than I was in the East, although the particular problems which arise for me now all cleave to the surface of things. How strange that the same inner meaning can find such profoundly different expressions: there as mystic recognition, here as impulse for conquest; there as all-understanding contentment, here as the blind desire for acquisition. But significance is no doubt the same everywhere, and it depends upon circumstances whether it appears as a beast of prey or as a lamb, as selfishness or greed, as understanding or action.

In California I have become distinctly aware for the first time of the nature of the factors which make the phenomenon of the Westerner possible, for here they appear in their extremest expression. The air is incredibly vitalising; I have never had so much kinetic energy at my disposal. And if I survey my impression of my inner life together with my new view of the world of plants, that most truthful expression of the elementary conditions of life, then I perceive directly in what sense the vitalising quality of this world differs from that of tropical nature. External circumstances seem nowhere more favourable to the flora than in the hothouse atmosphere of

Ceylon; nevertheless, they do not imply an optimum for life from its own point of view. There it is never strong; the individual is not distinctly marked; the elements luxuriate recklessly beyond the plan of the whole, the unifying link slackens, intensity suffers. In the case of plants and human beings the same phenomenon appears: lack of concentration together with an abnormal capacity for expansion. The line of demarcation between the individual and the species becomes blurred, the individual is lost in the mass. Generations of men luxuriate like climbing plants, products of the imagination flourish like weeds; it is only exceptionally that creatures of clear contours, of inner firmness and strength appear. In California everything tends towards individual formation. No matter how favourable the external circumstances may be, the inner factor dominates. The incredibly fruitful soil produces no jungle but single giant-trees.

The greater individualisation which distinguishes the West compared with the East implies accordingly less limitation than an increase of power in the possibilities of life; or, expressed more precisely, the loss in superfluous wealth comes to benefit the inner tension. And yet I feel it here more than ever, just here where nature appears most kind to the Western mind, how far the East is ahead of us. I find it excessively difficult to lead a mental existence; I succeed only with an enormous effort in concentrating my mind upon the problems of eternity; the magnificence of nature round about me hardly finds an echo in my soul. This is due only in a small degree to the fact that I am in a wilderness, in a world in which nothing has ever been thought out; it is chiefly due to the intimate processes which take place within my organism and rush into my consciousness irresistibly. I feel myself growing once more as if I were beginning my physical organic life anew; I feel myself reverting to the condition when all my vital forces were fully occupied with the formation of the body. The whole of the spirit seems confined to the body. Accordingly, all strife is limited materially; if I now strove to heaven I could only do so in the sense of the fir-tree. Our world is a nursery compared with that of the East. Curious that such things can become so

plain to one from the contemplation of trees. They are old enough, these giants which reach out above the crust of the earth two or three times as far as they do in Europe, but they belong to a young race. They are a primordial expression of life like the gigantic animals before the Flood. I would hardly be particularly surprised here if a Megatherium crossed my path, nor would a shudder of reverence for grey antiquity overcome me, but rather a feeling of cheerful satisfaction at the idea of how young this world still is.

We are more materially than spiritually minded, because we have not yet got beyond the period of physical growth; we are materialists as children are. For this very reason our energy is chiefly expressed in a blind desire for activity. If I lived longer in this country I too would develop enterprise; my spirit would become more and more embodied in matter, and the idealism of the philosopher would be changed to that of the *conquistador*. I cannot assert that this world is personally congenial to me. And yet I am quite clear about one thing: if it is the aspiration of the spirit to penetrate the world of appearance, if it is the mission of man to bring about this spiritualisation, then our materialism has a greater value in the future than the spirituality of Hindustan. This spirituality is powerless in the fact of Nature. It does not control her; for this reason it cannot spiritualise her. We may succeed in this. Only our path leads first into the very heart of matter. We must enter into and pass through all that over which the East has risen with a single leap. We must be materialists for the time being.

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IN these forests no higher kind of humanity is conceivable than that of Cooper's heroes. The roughriders, Red Indians and cowboys stand out magnificently against the background of this wild scenery, in which everything is so big and broad, and at the same time so simple; types of a more mental strain would appear as cripples. Here one must be bold and quick, determined and unscrupulous; the virtues of the prospector are the cardinal virtues. How very much alive the *conquistador* is still in the modern American! He practises robbery in drain-

ing the resources of the forests and the fields, robbery in the same sense upon men. He is hardly less nomadic and less untamed than the trapper was in the olden days.

I return in imagination to those boyhood days in which nothing delighted me more than to roam about in the woods, when the passion for hunting was my greatest joy, and when the adventurer who travelled in distant parts of the world embodied my highest ideal. Every real boy has passed through this phase; it signifies the normal exponent of consciousness during the period of strongest growth. What else is one to aspire to when one's arms grow longer every day, except to stretch them out further daily? And if one did not strive for this, how should the arms gain sufficient strength? It is not well to confess to high ideals at too early a date. Yes, the man of the Far West seems young, indeed almost primordial. It is in accordance with this recognition that the real weaknesses of the Americans should be judged. Of course they are barbarians, and in spite of their enviably advanced institutions they are highly dangerous for the continuance of Western culture: but certain concepts are simply alien to the schoolboy, he can see nothing evil in breaking a precious thing to pieces. Of course, sometimes the effect is very comic when so immature a nation assumes the habits of a grown-up one: but I have never yet seen a boy who did not deem himself more wise than his parents. The foreign politics of the United States are schoolboy politics, their poetry is the romanticism of an upper form. And that is what it ought to be at present; the individual who was not a proper boy never matures into a man. And then children only fail there where they have to deal with grown-ups, these unintelligible and ununderstanding creatures; wherever they treat with one another, according to their own natural assumptions, they generally manage everything very well; their greater lack of bias makes them appear sometimes even as more wise in the absolute sense. Thus, America has solved better than we have a good many problems of home politics, and the public conscience there is less corruptible. In America the masses judge just as boys judge in moral questions: primitively, linking everything to-

gether, lock, stock and barrel, with only a few simple assumptions; to this extent their judgments are often unwise and generally cruel, but they are hardly ever altogether wrong.

The European often seems old to himself when he compares himself with the American. He feels how much there is behind him, to what extent his possible future has been restricted in advance by his history. Many obvious improvements in our condition, easily capable of execution in theory, will not be realised any more unless it be by destructive violence. If this consciousness oppresses the European, then he should think of the East and the manner in which our world appears to him. The Oriental sees no difference between the European and the American, but that the latter seems more typical to him; we too appear to him as great clumsy children, who still have to learn a very great deal, and who have very, very much time in front of them. And he is right. We modern Westerners are essentially young. Even if our tradition dates back nearly as far as that of India, to-day we represent a world which was only created yesterday. The world-conception of progress, of democracy is something altogether new, it is hardly nearer to the philosophy to which it succeeded than that of China; and this outlook has formed us. The last hundred years have rejuvenated the white section of humanity. By transferring the stress in social importance from the higher to the lower strata, who hardly participate at all in our millennial heritage of cultural values, they effected much the same as the invasion of the barbarians did at the beginning of our era. In transplanting the ideal from the domain of 'being' into that of 'becoming' they have communicated even to the oldest the modality of life of youth, in so far as the modern spirit has taken hold of them. The whole West is to-day passing through its wild-oats period. And is this not to be rejoiced at? One outgrows the failings of youth; the decadence and neurasthenia of our day are, on the whole, not manifestations of age, but crises of growth, like anæmia and 'Weltschmerz'; that which is regretted as increasing coarseness really means that new primordial forces are being manifested. It is no doubt painful to think that the historical function of the traditional

cultured classes of old Europe is at an end; but at some time or other every one must make room for the younger generation. And this abdication does not imply death; in noble leisure, unconcerned with worldly ideals, the Western man of culture may yet continue to flourish for a long time and thus experience a sublimation which would never have fallen to his lot in active life. It is even possible that it is only then that he will achieve his greatest significance from the point of view of the future: we should remember, when despondency overtakes us, that it is the Jews and the Greeks, not the Goths and the Vandals, to whom the Germanic world owes the impulses which have given it direction ever since.

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THE MARIPOSA GROVE

HERE stand the mightiest trees in the world. About six hundred specimens of *Sequoia gigantea*, two to three hundred feet high, fifteen to thirty feet thick, form a holy grove, commanding reverence to a greater degree than romantic fancy could have conceived. It is dusky in there and cool, in spite of the August sun, which stands at its zenith. Its rays hardly find their way through the bushy crowns; the red of the trunks glows through the twilight as if the evening light were eternal. The giants stand there, upright and fresh, just as if thousands of years had not passed since the day of their creation. They are not lonely, for young people throng below them; they are not dead to the present, for year upon year their seed falls down to the distant earth; they are not old, for they are not threatened by natural death.

I am overwhelmed by a wave of the profoundest feeling of happiness. The earth is not as yet feeble from age! It is still capable of preserving and creating mighty things! For the first time I look up to grandeur without melancholy. Never before have I contemplated in palæontological collections the remains of prehistoric magnificence without bitterness, nor have I ever thought without pain of the giants which our

era produces every now and again from atavism or accident: for to me it seemed only too certain that the creative power of our planet is dying out, that soon only dwarfs and cripples will be able to continue upon it. Now I see that the youngest of the continents still possesses the primordial power of primitive days. I gratefully greet it therefore as the refuge of our future.

Humanity has never been so dependent upon physical conditions as are the white men of to-day; that is because they have set themselves a problem as no one else before them: they want to continue to change themselves *ad indefinitum*. Instead of setting themselves limits in given circumstances, they strive to get beyond them all so that no successful effort means an ultimate end to them. But only the youthful body is capable of changing and adapting itself, and that only to a certain point; for this reason all grown-ups become crystallised sooner or later, all civilised nations have ceased their development at some point, leaving further innovations to younger blood. For us no such boundary is visible in idea; the peculiarly fluid character of our civilisation makes every fixed aim and all stagnation seem inconceivable, it demands a new attitude every moment, and exacts that every one who wishes to join in must remain adaptable. This, however, means that he must remain completely young for the whole of his life. Thus, our problem is primarily a physical one. Many suspect this: the physical is idealised to-day as it has never been before. Gospels are preached in which health occupies the central position, just as love does in the Christian gospels. But what these apostles generally forget is that man as a physical being is profoundly interwoven in his connection with nature, and can do little without it. Even rejuvenation succeeds rarely except through transplantation into younger soil: eternal youth is only conceivable in a world which remains eternally young itself. In order to find bodies such as we need to-day, of boundless power of tension, of unfailing plasticity, an endlessly vitalising outer world would be needed, young as creation was upon the fifth day. This seems to exist here; American nature possesses the creative power of the beginning of time in an

unweakened state. Just as it has succeeded in fusing diverse races and making Americans of types chosen at random in the shortest period—not merely a variety of human beings, but a real type—so it may be expected of American nature that it can create the body which is a match for the constantly increasing mental tension, and which would be capable of perpetual change.

In America, if anywhere, we will complete our evolution. Europe will soon have spoken its last word of historical importance. Tradition in itself is a fetter, which becomes more binding from generation to generation, and ultimately suffocating, and the history of Europe is already so long that a radical liberation and innovation will hardly be successful upon its soil, not even if its inhabitants become ever so rejuvenated and attempt to evade the catastrophe, even through the most violent revolutions. This time too the old truth will be proved, that new cultures only flourish upon new soil; in this latest historical crisis too the problem of new forms will be solved, not by the most mature but by those who are the crudest. And that it must be so is quite obvious in this case: when we Westerners undertook, unlike all previous cultures who conducted life subject to the realm of ideas, to impress this realm upon the domain of the earth, we were really beginning a new epoch of creation; we begin as beings of spirit and soul precisely where physical nature started in the Triadic epoch. For this reason, the man of the New World fits into the Sequoia grove, this oasis of prehistoric days, better than into the ruins of Rome.

I look along the gigantic trees: how symbolic their manifestation is! Personalities like theirs need room; they cannot live as closely together as lesser beings, they are necessarily exclusive and haughty. The underwood of the Mariposa Grove, crippled and hopeless, would undoubtedly, if it could think, raise the social question. In the tropics this would never occur to it. There it is not individualised sufficiently to strive beyond the original cohesion of nature, and it is therefore hardly conscious of possible oppression. Why has the ideal of equality inflamed the West, whereas it has never yet

found honest supporters among the most oppressed Orientals? Because evolution leads us towards ever-increasing inequality; in the East, on the other hand, the greatest equality of opportunity exists which seems conceivable upon earth: the condition in which every one, no matter who he is, must remain in the station into which he was born, where no one has special opportunities. In the modern West every one may desire the highest position he can conceive; this, of course, is attained only by very few, and the rest thereupon demur. Our method of putting the problems of life is not false, but it precludes an ultimate solution. If one does not wish to recognise a condition of static equilibrium in unalterably disparate conditions of life, then one must continue to advance for ever, for equality in the sense of a static condition of equilibrium, of unalterably equal conditions of life cannot exist; it contradicts the nature of things. The modern Occidental attitude to the problem of life —equal opportunity for every one—brings eternal struggle with it.

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THE GRAND CAÑON OF COLORADO

In front of the immense picture of the Grand Cañon I must think of Kant's definition of the sublime: that object is sublime whose contemplation moves the mind to interpret the unattainableness of nature as the representation of ideas. Here, the ideas which control inorganic events appear expressed with a distinctness and power and 'largesse' as nowhere else. Here, one single stream in restless work has furrowed out a wide, high plateau so deeply and thoroughly that man, looking down from the cornice of the Cañon, that is to say from the original bed of the river, upon the present one, perceives a similar picture to that of the Himalayas; when looking heavenwards from their forerunners what he sees there is an Alpine landscape in the nether world. This work of a peacefully gliding stream produces a grander effect than anything which the powers of Plato have ever achieved, because it

was done without any extraordinary means; here one recognises, in fearful reverence, how omnipotent the forces of every day are. In the Grand Cañon of the Colorado the lines along which events proceed appear with incomparable clarity, for the decisive series of causes is hardly interfered with by others. Here no catastrophe has prepared the way, here no life has rounded off the edges or covered them with a fresh coat of paint. Everything has been undertaken and executed on the grandest scale. The Colorado has cut through all geological formations, from the glacial to the archaic. Acting only by virtue of its momentum and gravity, it has proceeded with but a single aim towards its goal, without any other tools than those which it possessed by nature, without petty considerations or violence. Where its course lay open before it, it spread out, thus changing whole provinces of flat country into mountain land; where only one course was in question, there it has collected its power and translated expansion into tension; everywhere, however, as in God's first creation, the result was good. Here the idea of hydraulic power, as Plato would say, has found its perfect expression. This power is lifeless: this could hardly be expressed symbolically more impressively than is the case here, in this greatest of all geological revelations, in which the stream has eaten its way through the life of all time. The inorganic forces tend downward, they run down like clockwork, incapable of winding themselves up again by themselves: no grander image of this state of things could be conceived than the Cañon provides, where the mountains belong to Hades and have not been piled up but cut out. There is no living spirit behind this achievement, and no purpose appears. It was begun and perfected without plan, and yet it is a monument of the very highest wisdom. The stream has overcome every obstacle as cleverly as any technician, it has understood the peculiarity of the materials more profoundly than any architect, and it has established the necessary relation between the details and the whole no worse than the greatest of landscape painters. The reason is, that the laws of calculating intellect are no other than the laws of the order of the world itself; nature always acts in accordance with reason; it does not require reasonable

guidance. Thus, perfection is its destiny everywhere where it is allowed to complete what it has begun.

The Grand Cañon of the Colorado is not only beautiful in this sense: the severe lines drawn by cosmic reason shimmer in a magnificence of colour which no Venetian could have made richer, and no Turner could have invented more imaginatively. This dead world seems to partake of eternal life. Every moment it expresses new moods, every hour its character changes. What differentiates the beauty that we strive after from that which is so magnificently realised in dead nature? In the one case it is a mechanical result; the cosmos is the final condition of chaos, there is nothing beyond it. The ideal of beauty is a propelling force, it points us towards heaven. The last word of nature, its testament as it were, is the magic formula which opens higher worlds to the spirit.

The delicate fusible colours play upon the deeply furrowed face of the Grand Cañon like a smile. Is not many a human visage more transfigured in the sleep of death than ever it was in life? I imagine that, just as to-day we men stand reverently before this miracle of death, so one day higher transfigured spirits will hover in devotion above the corpse of our earth. Our mightiest monuments will still stand out long after men have passed away. Occasionally the rays of a redder sun will lend them verisimilitude of life. Perhaps the actions of the spirit will be most grand in effect when eternal death shall have taken the place of the restlessness of life.

✦

I GAZE down meditatively into the nether world. Kant speaks of the unattainableness of nature, which is sublime in effect. . . . But is nature unattainable? Has man not excelled it already? Does he not achieve in a single year what the coloured stream has achieved in a million? To-morrow he will certainly succeed in principle. Material obstacles are no longer insurmountable. Even the wish of Archimedes, his δος μοι που στω, will one day be fulfilled. At the end of time this planet, in order to escape the disgrace of disruption, will perhaps burst freely at a time chosen by itself.

However, the man of to-day does not rule as God, but as the spirit of the earth. Materially he dominates nature, he is not superior to it; instead of guiding it in accordance with his own ideals, he generally only does what the elements themselves demand from him. He resembles those river-gods in which the ancients believed, whose dominating will corresponded with the natural gradient. Man is even less wise than they were in so far as he takes the circumstances less into account, so that his works are less beautiful and less permanent; if he had excavated the Grand Cañon, it would not be a miracle of beauty, it would have resembled a factory in ruin, and the ruin would not stand there for long. Modern man allows his aspirations to be dictated by blind nature, whose own will he only understands in part. Disposing over unlimited forces, he strives towards infinity, forgetful of the fact that his life is strictly confined. He suits his ideal to his ability instead of vice versa; he wants infinite wealth, infinite power, and as he does not know how to utilise them for himself, he pledges himself to them. Money becomes an end in itself to the business man, and he sacrifices himself to it; the same is true of power in the case of nations; the interests of capital perpetrate misdeeds unconsciously which no criminal would perform deliberately. The struggle for power of states, expressed in armaments, leads to wars of destruction, although all individuals only want peace. What centuries have erected organically is destroyed in the course of seconds; what conscious will has created serves the spirit, not of life but of dead matter. Our age is one of destruction as no other before has been, because man employs forces which are too big for him.

The Mahatmas, the peaceful supermen of the Himavat, have always controlled these forces; but they hand on their secrets only to the Chela who knows how to utilise them beneficently. But now they have been betrayed to the blind masses. . . . Still, this is not to be regretted as things are to-day. In an age where there are no differences of class, where the cry is: equal opportunities for every one! it is no longer possible for men to participate only in that for which they are inwardly mature; they must rather become mature by experience. The hardness

of his training ultimately makes wise even the fool. And it undoubtedly implies, where the problem is to instruct, not single individuals but every one, the shortest way to this goal. Experimental science has done more for the emancipation of the masses than the wisdom of the adepts; that liberty which allows every one to perpetrate his follies has furthered them more rapidly than Brahmanic tutelage. Thus, it is precisely the abuse of the forces of nature which will lead most rapidly to their wise exploitation. When the means of destruction have grown all too big, no people will declare war light-heartedly; the consequences of unlimited expansion will prove clearly that man was born to self-limitation. The nature of things leads everywhere to precisely that which the recognition of the sages has anticipated.

Therefore, we must not despair; our future is bright, no matter what terrible trials will be visited upon us in the meantime. Once man has learned to govern the forces outside himself, as the wise man controls his passions, then the spirit of the earth will be changed into a demigod. Then the blind forces will be a grateful means of realising the ideal in appearance.

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THROUGH CALIFORNIA

WHILE the train is bearing me through the fruit-fields of California, I am reminded of Mong-Tse's opinion: it is better to wait for fair weather than to acquire good tools to plough with. If the inhabitants had thought so, California, to-day the garden of the earth, would have remained a desert; nature intended it to be one. The rain is so scarce that only desert plants, Yuccas and dwarf-pines, flourish on their own; the soil is dried up by the sun; the waters, which rush down in the spring and the autumn from the Sierra Nevada, have long ago dug out deep beds for themselves and no longer moisten the wide plains. But man has pointed new ways to them; where they are insufficient he pumps up the necessary moisture from

artificial wells; thus, California is to-day perhaps the most fruitful district in the world.—That is our Western feeling for nature, as opposed to that of the Far East. We do not submit to the existing conditions, we change them. But in order to attain this we must have understood Nature profoundly; she may be subjugated and governed only according to her own laws. Thus, we too are not strangers to her heart. Only our attitude to her is different. The Easterner possesses the most intimate understanding of her. The Chinaman looks up to her like a loving son, who, full of piety and self-sacrifice, gladly bears even paternal cruelty and never permits himself any criticism; the Japanese treats her as one woman friend treats another; he countenances her, loves her as she is, but he helps her to show herself to best advantage as far as possible. Our understanding is comparable with that of the—schoolmaster. We become absorbed in her peculiarity, but only for the purpose of changing her in accordance with our own ideals. She is to be different, to be better than she was. Like all schoolmasters, we suffer from a lack of understanding for the individual element. We do succeed in breeding general types—that is to say, arable land, fields, meadows, forests as such, officials for special functions—and we even can bring an average nature to its highest perfection (a fertile meadow is more beautiful than a barren one), but in accordance with the usual schoolmaster's fate we do not succeed in treating an exceptional nature according to its own necessities. Wherever absolute appropriateness is attained, beauty is the inevitable result. American stretches of cultivated country are generally ugly, because no consideration is taken of the peculiarity of its nature.

But that will come. The Americans are still children, great clumsy boys in the midst of their hobbledehoyhood. It cannot be expected of them that they should be as considerate as the men of the Far East. They will become so in the course of time. For it is a misunderstanding that our relation to nature must necessarily destroy beauty; it does so only because we have not yet traversed our road to the end. The Japanese art of agriculture delights the eye because in it the specifically Japa-

nese relation between man and nature finds its perfect expression—not because this relation is the most favourable in itself. Whether I act as a determined or determining factor is a matter of indifference in principle; all that matters is that I should discover harmonious proportion. And we will all succeed in doing this one day, just as we have often succeeded already in detail. It is wrong to compare the attitude of the European's scientific understanding with the artistic understanding of the Asiatic: the scientific attitude is the more preliminary. If the Japanese had not observed acutely as a research student, he would never have attained the technique which makes him incomparable as a gardener. The scientific trait in him is less noticeable because he has not gone so far as we have, and has applied himself to productive synthesis at an earlier stage. We penetrate farther into nature; we have hardly yet begun with creative synthesis. But once we are so far, and are sufficiently mature that joy in nature predominates over greed, then I do not doubt that we will be able to present the specific relation which we occupy to the non-human elements no less perfectly than the Japanese represent theirs.

66

IN THE YELLOWSTONE PARK

I LOOK out upon the wide prairie from a shimmering cinder-hill, which the geysers have piled up in the course of thousands of years. It is the hour in which the bisons start their nightly wanderings. They proceed singly, each one by himself and at considerable distances from each other; but all steer the same course unerringly, like wandering birds. What is it which gives these animals complete knowledge of the country? I do not know; probably no one knows. For men too who possess the same faculty do not know either.

A few decades ago a single herd of buffaloes numbered not infrequently several thousand head; to-day not one hundred live in the wide plain of Yellowstone Park, and in the whole of America there are fewer than used to make up one average-

sized herd. We have exterminated them. And as I watch the last of these giants, which fit so admirably into the prairie, I tremble with anger. How poor the world is becoming for our sake! We do, of course, fence in wide tracts of country in the interests of animals, and we appoint districts to the redskins; but this does not put a stop to their destruction. The buffaloes perish inside the fences, the Indians degenerate since they are no longer allowed to wage war; both are inevitably dying out. Soon all picturesque types will belong to the past; soon the whole surface of the earth will resemble the intensely cultivated land of Central Germany—everything divided up equally, laid out according to a pattern, inhabited only by men and thoroughbred cattle. I know: without committing suicide we will not be able to prevent this effect which we exercise. But what blindness to regard such 'progress' as a happy issue! It is simply appalling that the earth is becoming more uniform from day to day. For this does not mean a change of the existing energy, but an absolute loss of energy, because there is no substitute in the place of what is lost. Life is not transmutable in the same sense as electricity. Every type means something final, every one of them incarnates a possibility which exists only once and will never exist again. No matter, therefore, how blessed the race of Europeans, of cows, of horses and of prize pigs may be in future—it would not fill the gap which the eradication of other manifestations has eaten into creation. The world is growing poorer every day. That this is the real meaning of progress, America illustrates with horrifying clarity, because here the white man seems typified most strongly as the 'man with a purpose.' Nowhere is nature as magnificent as it is here; everything here has been created on a large scale, everything great is capable of life, only greatness is appropriate to the circumstances; this fundamental state of affairs would, so one could have supposed, embrace all values created by the mind: instead of that, they have all been lost sight of with the single exception of quantity. Only size and numbers impress the American; he only strives after them. This impoverishment of his soul is the necessary and inevitable consequence of the exclusive struggle after suc-

cess. And what he does is becoming more and more the aspiration of Europe. Even to-day a widespread new philosophy has proclaimed the 'economic principle' as the ideal of thought —and thus raised what is a matter of course to the highest goal. We are becoming ever narrower and poorer, and this narrowness exterminates all wealth. Every definite line of development is exclusive, but the one we pursue is probably the first which destroys the others involuntarily. It is burdened with the curse of possessing such great power over the blind forces of nature that it must destroy even where it would preserve. The modern white man takes more conscious delight in nature than any other man, he is more profoundly interested than any one else in the peculiarity of alien phenomena; nevertheless, wherever he turns, that which he is not or does not need dies out irremediably.

Aryan European humanity has not much less destruction and murder on its conscience than that of Turkey and Mongolia, although the latter alone has perhaps practised destruction as an end in itself. The Romans erected their world empire upon the ruins of the old and peculiar states of the Mediterranean. Thereupon, the Germanic people dismantled the whole structure. Their offspring destroyed the cultural creation of the Arabs, then that of the Incas and the Aztecs. And if intentions have improved since then, our means of destruction have become so perfect, and our civilisation in itself has, moreover, become so deadly for all who are not born in and for it, that the opposite is true of the result. Hegel teaches that stepping over corpses is the way in which the 'objective spirit' had to walk in order to reach fulfilment; that the leading nation of the day alone is of consequence, as the bearer of the 'idea,' and therefore justified in subjugating or exterminating all the others: he would be right if historical significance really contained all values within it. However, quite apart from the fact that this significance cannot be ascertained at all without prejudice, a prejudice, moreover, subject to the very doubtful assumption that whatever happens was for the best and bound to happen anyhow, which assumption implies that material success expresses the judgment of

God—it may be regarded as certain that historical leadership possesses no necessary relation whatever to spiritual and mental importance. India and China, both of enormous importance, have not played any part in the movement of world history as Hegel understands it. That Christ and Buddha became the bearers of historical power seems accidental in relation to them. The historical process in itself is of a piece with the biological process; this is so notwithstanding the fact that among men not only physical but also psychic organisms (ideals, the contents of faith) supplement and fight each other. Since the ideal process, which in itself is independent of the biological process, nevertheless takes place by means of it, a relation between both can be established on an *a posteriori* basis wherever action takes place. But essentially such a relation does not exist; the biological element is only a means, and if its laws are raised to ideals it causes mischief. It leads to views which are unworthy of human beings, such as that there is no higher entity than the state, that power is an aim in itself, that any means is permissible in the intercourse between nations, that a certain race has the right to enslave all the others, and that the modern *homo technicus* fulfils the very will of God in ruining the whole of creation for purposes of his personal enrichment. Power, in the sense of being able and willing to compel others by force, far from implying something good in itself (which all believers in progress must tacitly presuppose, for only thanks to material power does Hegel's 'idea,' as well as 'Christian' civilisation, succeed), is rather, as Jakob Burckhardt has so far recognised most profoundly, essentially evil and it also makes men evil. No power on earth has ever been founded without crime, not one has been maintained without some form of violence; the law of its life is of a fiendish, not of a divine kind. For this reason it is not nor will it ever be possible to establish a natural and necessary connection between earthly power and what is good in the moral and spiritual sense. Our Western civilisation, as the most powerful in the worldly sense which has ever existed, is by nature not good but evil: for this reason it not only brings destruction to all those who do not know how to adapt them-

selves to it—it also corrupts the bearers. This typical result is obviated where power serves to realise spiritual and moral ideals, and fortunately it serves to do so more and more. Wherever man gives himself up to his own spirit, he turns into a devil.

Now it is certain that evil has its definite and necessary function in the economy of the world. Destruction alone prepares the way for a radical innovation. If there is to be serious progress, then the natural processes of growth and decay must occasionally be accelerated. Only revolution explodes old rigid forms, only the premature end of generations, such as war brings about, rends the thread of fettering tradition. World-embracing cultures would never have come to exist if one species of men had not subjugated others and thus raised certain forms out of the jungle of wild luxuriance to predominance. Last and not least—death and killing are normal processes of nature. Beasts of prey must plunder, and they seem no less entitled to existence than those who only consume plants. The acceleration and increase of the turnover of life occasioned by wars, catastrophes and plagues, alter qualitatively nothing in the nature of events, and, quantitatively, very little in so far as there is a law of compensation in most things; the succession of faunas and floras in the course of geological epochs proves already by itself that every definite manifestation must necessarily die out at some time or another, and whether this occurs slowly, through the power of changing circumstances, or suddenly, through the invasion of an Attila, is probably a matter of indifference. The eternal values are essentially mortal in the temporal sense. The Indian myth, according to which creation and destruction are correlative attributes of the deity, is apparently very near to the truth: at times evil is divinely ordained. Only man should not usurp the position of Shiva; what is befitting to Him man may not desire deliberately; the inevitability of death does not justify the murderer. Just as birth and natural death are beyond the sphere of personal volition, so does the general scheme according to which the whole of life evolves stand above individual

judgment. In the domain of senseless creatures this scheme attains to perfect realisation wherever cosmic actions or human whims do not cross its path; the self-regulation of nature works with marvellous wisdom. The same thing would happen among men if each individual did what was appropriate to him. Then God would express Himself through the free volition of human beings, all that was requisite from God's standpoint would be done, no necessary conflict, no fate would be omitted, but the individual would be without metaphysical guilt, and judged by general results everything would contribute to the best. But men only do rarely what they ought to do, all the more rarely the more consciously they act. And where they undertake to determine events, believing themselves to know the plan of the whole, they work mischief. All this leads to insensate wars, to all-exterminating evolutions; the self-regulation of nature is destroyed and folly gains the victory. In this way white men have made havoc upon earth in many, in all too many directions.

And yet their activity in other directions is divinely willed. Obviously the general equilibrium of forces has been changed in the sense that we, in so far as we affirm ourselves at all, must predominate; obviously much which is valuable and which we destroy is anyhow no longer capable of life in our world; evidently the time has come in which something new is being born at the expense of the old forms of life, be they ever so beautiful; and no argument can resist fate. This, however, means that there really is something which one might call the 'right of the stronger.' It is as little a question here of moral right as in any other equation of material forces: on the contrary, violation practised upon living beings is always evil, every act of violence as such is a blow in the face of justice, and the most just execution or penalty offends the moral sense in some way or another. But forces are realities which express themselves according to their own laws; on their level of existence they alone are valid. And however often evil vanquishes good, and crudeness perfection, no matter how frequently moral consciousness is thereby wounded and thought

fails in the attempt to understand the meaning of necessity—sometimes it is possible to realise the beneficial quality of what is evil in itself, not only in small matters, as in the case of the compulsion of law and penalty, but even on a great scale. This applies particularly to the 'right of the stronger.' History teaches that the most violent tribes have often developed into cultured nations with the highest moral outlook. This is to be explained, unless I am mistaken, in the following manner: physical superiority is only durable upon a moral basis. Without courage, strength achieves nothing; without readiness for sacrifice, discipline, organisation, even courage is of no avail. No matter how one-sided the advantages at issue may be—they demark the natural basis which seems most capable of a continued development towards the highest. The Germanic people, who destroyed the old world, were rough and cruel, but they were also courageous, loyal and ready to sacrifice; this enabled them, given their talents, to become continuously better in the course of centuries, whereas Greeks and Romans, who were refined but cowardly and false, perished through degeneration. Only the proud individual who respects himself respects others too; if the most justly minded people of Europe could have developed from the violent Anglo-Saxon, this is due to the fact that all virtue begins with the ego and enlarges its circle from there, that the primitive faith in personal prerogative is the seed of all sense of justice in general—whereas among the Russians, who have always been good-hearted and never recognised a right for themselves of oppressing others, for whom the spiritual vision of original Christianity is born in their blood, arbitrariness reigns supreme even to-day. The nature of the strong alone assures to the spiritual powers means of embodiment pregnant with a promising future. To this extent, as long as earthly development continues, all the more so whenever it is started afresh, there will also be a right of the stronger.

. . . This is how the intellect judges. But as an æsthetic being, I regret with all my heart that the processes of the world take this and not another course. I would gladly sacrifice all technical achievements that I might behold for a single eve-

ning the prairie in all its old magnificence, just as it was before the paleface declared the war of extermination upon the redskin.

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IN these wild and vitalising surroundings I become ever more conscious of the violent and aggressive quality of my own humanity. We Westerners are essentially fighters. Whereas the Chinaman believes in a predetermined harmony between man and the cosmos, which must be preserved at any price, whereas the Indian, no matter what he does, withholds himself and does not participate inwardly in the struggle for existence, we stand by conviction in the midst of it. We do not trouble ourselves about the whole, we are and want to be elements and wish to fight our way through as such. The worst and the best in us emanate from this fighting spirit. Our lust for conquest and piracy originate from it, but also the movement towards reform, science, social conscience. Because we are essentially fighters, we accept no authority unquestioningly, we wish to investigate freely, every one wants to decide for himself. The warrior knows no compromise, his will is to conquer or to be vanquished, his motto is: you or I.

As long as I was in the East, our fighting nature appeared to me in an unfavourable light. How could it be otherwise? The fighter is essentially destructive, essentially blind, prejudiced, unjust, without understanding. The sage—and the whole of life is directed by him in the East—never fights; he stands above parties, surveying the cohesion of all manifestations, personally centred in it, and he would be untrue to himself if he identified himself with any appearance. But whence his superiority? I never put this question to myself in the East. If I answer it now, it becomes evident that I did injustice to the West. For the colourless sceptic, the indifferent, cold, undecided individual is not the sage: on the contrary, of all beings, the ready sceptic is furthest removed from the sage. If the sage does not fight, this is not due to the fact that he rejects all struggle to begin with as purposeless, but because he has finished his fights, because he has overcome all

dissensions between himself and the world; the process of discussion which generally takes place outside and hardly ever leads to a final result, has been completed for him in the stillness of his soul. And by means of this recognition I only perceive now the whole profundity of the Indian myth, according to which the Kshattrya, the knight, is preliminary to the Brahmin: there is no recognition without fight; only the man who has fought gallantly as a warrior is mature for the divine peace of wisdom.

This is explained by the fact that the decision of a battle is not merely a mechanical result, but simultaneously brings about an organic change. If convictions in general are affirmed clearly only after discussion has taken place, if people, after arms have decided, readily accept changes in power which but lately they regarded as unacceptable, when the man who was always strong grows into a hero only in adversity, this is due to the fact that souls become changed in battle. And they can only become changed in this way. Mere theoretical insight does not influence our inner nature. No matter how clearly one may recognise the necessity of a new order, one may yet be incapable of carrying it out in practice; one may recognise all virtue and yet remain a blackguard. Christ and Buddha were probably in intellectual possession of their wisdom long before revelation was vouchsafed to them; nevertheless, their mission dates only from this hour. And this hour was one of bitter strife. Tempted by the Evil One, both had to vanquish him first: then, not before, were they free. This means that only then their human souls had been changed so far that they could serve as a tool for supra-human knowledge.

It is given to one among millions to become a Buddha, very few can rise considerably above the point of their departure; for this reason, a static order of society which does tolerable justice to the classes of natural rank, presents the most satisfactory picture at any given time. The individual, guided by his type, finds his perfection easily, and on the whole harmony prevails. But such an order does not permit any progress: only the born sage becomes wise in it, every one remains at the

level which nature appointed for him, humanity does not move at all from where it stands. In a world of strife all possibilities are open to every one. When everybody stands for what he thinks right with complete sincerity, striving after that to which he believes himself to be called, he tests by direct experience what is in him, and thus gives every opportunity of development to every seed. And when every one tests himself in the same way, an adjustment takes place on a large scale which necessarily leads forward. The nature of things implies that every mistake revenges itself at some time or another, that everything false ultimately proves itself to be so, that everything rotten decays one day, and, on the other hand, that everything of value justifies its worth and that every truth proves itself—provided that such nature is given the opportunity of expressing itself. This opportunity is there as soon as man has the courage of daring. Since the individual fighters are always blind, the process proves little enough in the individual case. Reactionaries and revolutionaries, socialists and individualists, blind believers and freethinkers—however many factors there may be whose opposition goes to make up the dialectics of modern evolution—they are all right in some part, and they are all wrong on the whole. Each one of them is only an element in a gigantic process, whose plan no mortal may survey, and no one ever achieves that for which he has battled. But no fight was ever in vain. Every man of ideal tendencies plays his part, no matter how modestly, in the improvement of the world, every resistance against evil weakens its power, every sacrifice benefits the future. And the whole develops constantly in spite of all reaction in an upward direction, which is guided by the nature of things, in the sense that the improvements of conditions which are possible at a given time and in a given place actually occur. Neither the men of 1790 nor those of 1848 achieved what they strove after, and it was well that this was so, for they desired much that was foolish; but thanks to them we are considerably farther on than they were. The Socialistic doctrine, as such, is mistaken, only without it we would not yet be so close to the juster order of rights which

seems possible now.[1] Progress is only possible in a struggling world; in a static and peaceful one there is no evolution.

Every individual should only be sincere and upright, should have the courage to err, to commit a folly, to be limited and even to perpetrate a crime; the nature of things, or, as it is expressed in the Indian manner, the law of Karma, will provide for the rest. The way of the fighter seems very mechanical, and so it is; the individual figures here only as an element, without understanding his aim; and salvation comes from without. However, a higher path is not practicable for the masses. More developed individuals may wander upon the path of recognition or of love—for the others, only Karma-Yoga is in question. The Karma-Yoga which has been invented and is practised by us is the most profound of all. In it we are not concerned with tacit surrender to presupposed forms, to the expected reaction of dogmata, exercises, rites, but with self-sacrificing initiative. And no conceivable Yoga could lead the majority of men more quickly to their goal. No matter how boastful the assertion may be on the whole, that we have got so gloriously far—it must be admitted that, since our more accelerated evolution has begun, an incredible amount has been achieved. One should remember the position of the lower English, or even Irish, classes a hundred years ago, the position of factory workers everywhere even a shorter while ago, and think at the same time of the reaction which their misery exercised upon their souls: no one can then deny that to-day we are living in a new and better world, a world not merely of greater prosperity but of nobler outlook. This, however, has been created by struggle alone, by self-assertive egoism; it would have remained uncreated if the Chinese love of order, or the primitive Christian non-resistance to evil, had guided men's will-power. In a world of struggle egoism leads most rapidly to the goal. How is this possible when it ultimately implies a misunderstanding? For this very reason: the nature of things proves egoism to be a misconception, and transforms it; cut-throat competition necessarily leads, sooner or later, to collaboration. Just as the iron-factories of Belgium and

[1] See my criticism of Socialism and also the outlines of the new order as I perceive it, in my book *Politik, Wirtschaft, Weisheit,* Darmstadt, 1922.

Germany, which fought each other at the beginning of this century, arrived at an agreement which allowed each party to the contract to produce a certain quantity and no more, so it will be eventually everywhere in our world, precisely because we are born to violence.

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IN this way the significance and peculiarity of modern Western culture may be defined exhaustively by one concept: it is the culture of sincerity. We admit more than any one else what we want and what we are. Whatever we may countenance temporarily—really and ultimately we believe in ourselves alone, and we do not rest until our position in and to the world is in agreement with our individual convictions. Accordingly, loyalty to conviction and empirical truthfulness are among our highest ideals. We do not know, as the Indians do, how to unite externally metaphysical truth and telling lies, or, like the Chinese, how to maintain a prescribed outer order without breach of faith, without even questioning to what extent it corresponds to ourselves: according to our view, we regard it as better to perish as the result of personal mistakes than to serve a truth we have not understood, better to lie, in the metaphysical sense, by the courageous practice of what we believe than to pronounce an empirical untruth. Here too we are guided by the fundamental idea which lies at the bottom of all Western cultural manifestations, that it is the mission of man to embody significance in appearance.

In China I contemplated the disadvantages of sincerity. It advances the individual less than blind surrender to something outside him, if this coincides with an objective optimum, and in so far as personal opinion is erroneous; in this sense our crudeness is largely due to our sincerity. But our barbarism, on the other hand, has more future than any culture based upon authority, because courage and truthfulness, and they alone, necessarily lead forward, because, above all, they alone accelerate the processes of evolution. According to the nature of things, even our mistakes must turn to blessings.

I pass in review the history of our sciences and philosophies. How many bypaths have we not trodden, and how many

detours have we not embarked upon! How many preliminary statements have we not honoured as the final word, with how many one-sided formulas have we not imagined that we have exhausted the significance of the world! But every mistake nevertheless resulted in some good. Whereas some recognise only Being, others only Becoming, every possibility was worked out so clearly in the fight between the various schools that their connection seems perfectly plain to-day. While revolutionaries condemn all traditional morals, and raise selfishness as their banner quite candidly, they force the others to discover the reason for their opposite convictions, with the result that truth is all the more firmly established, and many an error is eradicated. We owe it to the enmity against the Church, to free-thinking and anti-religiosity that to-day at last the significance of religious faith is beginning to be recognised, with the result that what used to be the dark content of blind belief is becoming clear recognition. Every criticism brings a blessing in the long run, no matter how one-sided it may be, no matter how much beauty it may destroy at the moment. For here too it is a case of: die and be born again (Stirb und werde)! New life arises only from the decayed seed, only out of the decay of what has been accepted blindly does clear knowledge grow. If man is to become autonomous, completely responsible for everything which he wills, thinks and does, then he must also be completely conscious of his causes and reasons. He must explode all dogmas as such, he must renounce all prejudice, all reinsurance in racial experience. The recent age was dedicated to this process. The mental cosmos has thus retrogressed once more into chaos, which foments and boils, and what will ultimately come of it cannot be anticipated in detail. But the general goal is certain by now: our culture of sincerity *must* lead to the result that the harmony based upon heteronomy is becoming transformed into one based upon autonomy, that all truth which was accepted previously on the strength of authority will become personal recognition, and that personal self-consciousness will become altogether the bearer of the will of humanity. And this alone can lead thither. No matter what pleasant pictures of accomplished perfection the

Indian, Chinese and Catholic Christian systems may offer—they contain no possibility of evolution. Only along our path can a new order develop.[1]

The youngest and most typical Westerner, the American, is the most sincere of all human beings; this redeems his lack of culture. His potentialities are unlimited. No matter how little preliminary states as such can stand comparison with perfection—in a world of growth they have a right to existence. And ultimately these preliminary states are closer in idea to the supreme conceivable consummation than Indian perfection is. I recall to mind my observations concerning its peculiarity: the Indians, profoundly conscious of significance, never find it necessary to take into consideration, in expressing it, the particular meaning of the means employed, they never demand the congruity of both levels of meaning. For this reason they regard facts and inventions, realities and myths, lies and truths, superstitions and precise knowledge as equal, if only significance as such appears to have been seized. But this can only be realised completely where it permeates appearance throughout, where no kind of opposition exists between the inside and the outside.[2] For this reason, inventions and facts, lies and truths are not of equal value; contradictions within the sphere of expression rob significance of its efficacy; hence the failure of the Indians in practical life and as men. The Westerner is a fanatic of exactitude; hence his unparalleled success in the world of appearance. Of significance he knows little as yet. If, however, he perceives it at all, then he will find perfect expression for it, he will establish the perfect harmony between essential being and phenomena.

[1] I have developed these ideas in the Chapters 'Antikes und Modernes Weisentum' and 'Was uns Not tut' in *Schoepferische Erkenntniss.* See also my essay 'Psychoanalyse und Selboervallkemmung' in the sixth volume of my *Weg zur Vollendung.*

[2] I have developed this particular trend of thought in the Chapter 'Sinn und Ausdruck in Kunst und Leben' of *Schoepferische Erkenntniss.*

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SALT LAKE CITY

As I was turning over the leaves and tracts in the office of the Mormon Temple, waiting for the beginning of the organ recital which takes place at noon, the saleswoman turned to me and asked if the new gospel had already been preached to me? I replied that I was familiar with the writings of the Mormons.—Are you already convinced that they contain the word of God? And, without giving me time to answer, she continued: That is just the wonder of our religion, that it is possible to obtain certainty without digression concerning the divine origin of its revelation. God has proclaimed through Joseph Smith that he who petitions Him for knowledge in truthfulness will be answered directly, and He is as good as His word: that is how I was converted. I am a Munich girl; it was by accident that I listened to a Mormon missionary; he showed me how I could be certain of the divine origin of the Book of Mormons. So I asked God—and behold: He answered me at once with an audible Yes. Since then I am here and I am very happy.—I looked at her and was really touched. She belonged to the usual type of convert such as populate all revivalist churches; but I had never heard with my own ears such touchingly simple ideas expressed. In this respect the Mormon Church stands undoubtedly at the head of all spiritual institutions. How pathetic is the history of Mormon polygamy! It had been revealed to Joseph Smith that the family ties continue in Heaven; thus polygamy was recognised as existing in so far as the man who marries several women, one after the other, upon earth, will possess them all at once in heaven. Thus, the next revelation, that man should have several women on earth, was only a corollary to the preceding revelation. Nevertheless, this commandment was a terrible shock to the minds of the faithful; it was opposed to all the prejudices of their worthy Anglo-Saxon souls. However, the fear of God gained the victory, and with a heavy heart they took several wives unto themselves. The trials

soon began; a period of such bitter persecution followed that the Church was threatened with destruction. The Lord thereupon was merciful: He revealed to the president, Wilford Woodruff, that polygamy might now cease. 'Thus, the latter-day saints,' according to a canonical writing (*Mormonism* by B. H. Roberts, published by the Church, page 57), 'as far as polygamy is concerned, are responsible neither for its introduction nor for its abolition. The Lord commanded it at first in spite of all human prejudices; then taking mercy on the suffering which obedience brought down upon His faithful, He permitted the return to monogamy. It is God's business to answer for the commandments that emanate from Him.'—I am reminded of the judgment which Swami Vivekānanda delivered concerning all the religious founders of the West he knew of: in them, genuine revelation was mixed in a curious manner with quaint superstition; no doubt they were inspired by God, but they were psychically too uncultured to perceive what had been revealed to them in its purity, and to understand it correctly. And that is so. In Mormonism that which applies in principle to all religious manifestations of Western humanity only appears in its extremest form. Undoubtedly Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were just as genuine prophets as Moses, Wesley, Luther and Calvin; only they were exceedingly ignorant and uneducated. But in this respect they are not essentially different—and one should be clear on this point—from our greatest men. What is one to say, for instance, of Luther, who rejected what was believed to be the nature of religion by all profoundly religious minds before him as a transient, secondary and even questionable manifestation, and regarded as its nature precisely what before him was considered as its derivative effect; who has taught that religion is nothing else, and can mean nothing higher, than blind faith in God and the use of the Word and sacraments as means to salvation? [1] One can only be awkwardly silent at the lack of understanding of this great man. His personal religion was wonderfully profound, but his thoughts concerning religious matters all remained on the surface. And then Calvin: is his

[1] See Adolf Harnack, 'Reden und Aufsätze,' II. pp. 300, 302.

dogmatism not monstrous? Monstrous indeed is the idea of eternal damnation, imposed upon powerless souls from the beginning by an all-merciful God for His own glorification. Nevertheless, Calvin was otherwise a highly cultured man, and Luther a genius: for this reason the spirit of profundity radiates from their most superficial mental images, so that through all their errors one feels that they knew more than they could pronounce. Among the Anglo-Saxon reformers, especially those from across the sea, one feels nothing similar. The Anglo-Saxon race, in many ways the most developed in the world, is religiously at a completely primitive stage. It is so unphilosophical, so unpsychological, so altogether undifferentiated and unreflective as far as the life of the soul is concerned, that otherwise distinguished Britons profess candidly religious forms which, according to our judgment, would hardly be suited to the simplest country yokel. No Anglo-Saxon founder of religion was ever capable of a philosophical judgment, and if he belonged, into the bargain, to the lower strata of the people, and if he was uncultured and unschooled altogether, like most of the American reformers, then systems like that of the Mormons came into existence. Once more: the man who is familiar with India, or knows by other means what religious culture is, does not regard such excrescences as the Duchobortsy in Russia, the Pietists in North Germany and the Mormons in America as anything extraordinary; he regards them, rather, as tolerably typical forms of expression of religious experience in the West.

We Occidentals are not men of understanding, but men of action. The same Mormons whose religious ideas seem so childish have achieved a civilisation hardly attained by any other people; in barely half a century they have changed a salt desert into a garden. They are, moreover, admirable citizens, law-abiding, honest and progressive. Such practical advantages are not characteristic of the Indians, in spite of their greater insight. Apparently there is no necessary connection between the philosophical value of an idea and its importance in life, nor can a judgment be formed concerning the latter

from the former. The idea of predestination is a monstrosity: nevertheless, it has formed the strongest men in history; the whole efficacy of modern man is traceable to the doctrine of John Calvin. The Lutheran attitude of religion is strangely superficial: nevertheless, from it, or within it, the profoundest mental culture of Europe has originated, and its spirit lies at the bottom of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, just as it lies at the bottom of the greatest German speculation. The Catholic Church, with its opposition to all independence, with its primitive mythology and its enmity to progress, signifies, even to-day, the best psychological institution for education, perhaps the best school for self-recognition which we possess. And Brahmanism, with its marvellous profundity of recognition, has shown itself incapable not only of influencing the practical life of the masses anything like as favourably as the cruder forms of religion of the West, but it has advanced recognition less on the whole than Lutherism has. It will not do, in judging a religious idea, to disregard the empirical circumstances within which it is to be effective. Their efficacy depends upon the degree in which it influences the will of men; and this depends upon the pre-established harmony between religious concepts and instincts, which, in their turn, depend upon the surroundings in which they grew up, and so on. In general, the following is the most that may safely be said: where spiritual culture is small and the intensity of volition great, primitive ideas prove themselves to be the best; where the opposite condition prevails, there all ideas are ineffective; only where both are more or less on the same high level, spiritual value more or less determines their efficacy. One portion of European humanity has lately reached this final stage; but this portion is smaller than one thinks; even among us, primitive concepts are best suited to the majority.

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WHEN one regards American sects, not in themselves, but as the exponents or representatives of Western religion, they appear much more interesting, for here, as everywhere else, the

typical characteristics of the Westerner are more in evidence in America than in Europe, and they have attained to more advanced stages of development.

What differentiates our sense of religion fundamentally from that of India? That in our case, as opposed to India, the *principium individuationis* is the ruling principle of every manifestation. Religion in the West is concerned with the relation of the individual as such to God; there is no instance above the individual within the human sphere. Thus, individual phenomena acquire value. No matter how this relation may be understood in the particular—in the sense of the infinite value of the human soul pure and simple (Christ), of personality as the highest boon (Goethe), of the superman (Nietzsche), the 'Godman' (Johannes Müller, New Thought), which every individual can develop out of himself or awaken in him—it is the stressing of the value of the individual as such which gives its singular character to Occidental religion. It is to this that most, and at any rate the most important differences between Eastern and Western religious life are to be traced. Nowhere are there more sects than in India; nowhere are the marks of differentiation more distinctly developed. But as the emphasis is not laid upon the differences, the same consequences do not follow upon this state of things which would have resulted in similar circumstances in the West. Among us, differentiation has always occasioned enmity; in our case, if one sect looks down upon another, makes war upon it, persecutes it, seeks to exterminate or to convert it, if value is to be attached to individual forms, then the form recognised as the true one at any given time naturally robs all others of their worth, which results in the right, and even the duty, of doing away with them somehow or other. But when individual phenomena are not regarded as values, but as particularised expressions of higher qualities, then intolerance, exclusiveness, the passion for proselytising, and even the mere missionary zeal, lose their footing entirely. For this reason even the Mahayana religion, which imposes the duty of sending out missionaries, has never practised intolerance: it is absolutely opposed to the Indian spirit to regard a special manifestation as of value in itself.

There is no doubt that the Indian attitude is the right one in principle: individuality has no value in itself; but it can become the bearer of values, and if this takes place it acquires a spiritual density which radically changes its nature. Hence the immense and unique efficacy which marks the Western spirit in all its manifestations. What forces has the mere fact of being different not released among us! One should think of the struggles between Christian and heathen, Catholic and Protestant, sticklers for tradition and sticklers for progress: however little justified they may seem inwardly, they have caused prodigious and, moreover, beneficent effects. Every fighter saw, in his particular profession, the only possible vessel for absolute truth, he filled it with the entire content of ideals which he possessed and thus became more clearly and intimately conscious of them than he could have done if he had contemplated them by themselves without taking sides. This explains why our limited recognition has signified more for the progress of humanity than the more profound and wider doctrine of the Indians: we have embodied what we knew in our personal life, and by this means we have communicated the whole vital power of our personal wishes and aspirations to our ideas. In this way the riddle is solved why the Duke of Alba's and Cromwell's intolerance have contributed more to the victory of the freedom of conscience than the omniscience of an Erasmus: tolerance develops into indifference in practice, and can therefore not change the world by itself, whereas every one-sided action, thanks to the counter-action which it occasions, tends towards the transformation of the old condition of equilibrium into a new one.[1] In this way the paradox is explained to which I have pointed several times in the course of these observations—the paradox that the value of an idea as such guarantees its practical value so little that more limited and even monstrous conceptions have often proved to be more beneficent than others more profound: where the accent of being is laid upon appearance, it becomes transfigured; it signi-

[1] I have developed this idea in my lecture *Spannung und Rhythmus* which deals with the particular mission of the West in future history (see *Der Leuchter,* 1923).

fies what has no relation to, in fact hardly any connection with, its own particular meaning; it becomes the expression of the absolute. Thus, the nations of the West, in spite of the blindness of their souls, their limitations, their one-sidedness and intolerance, and one can almost say because of them, have achieved more for humanity as a whole than any others have done hitherto; they alone have undertaken and understood how to realise the ideals which they recognised progressively.

The medium of this realisation was nothing else than the party spirit, its fundamental motive was the faith in the absolute value and substantiality of the individual; but the operative force was the ideal. Thus, the normal path of progress leads of its own accord beyond limitation. Nobody has probably been religious in a more narrow sense than the American pilgrim fathers; for a long time the most cruel intolerance predominated on the other side of the ocean. The persecutions in particular which the Mormons had to endure were terrible. But because the *principium individuationis* was exaggerated in America, it exploded there at the earliest stage. Sect upon sect arose, each one imagined itself at first to possess a monopoly of truth, and secluded itself strictly from all the rest. As all Americans, however, have accepted the absolute freedom of the individual as the fundamental principle of political philosophy, the necessary consequence in the long run was that one individual had to countenance another; tolerance slowly but irresistibly took the place of original intolerance. Thus a process had begun, which undoubtedly implies a high-water mark in human evolution up to the present: a practice which in idea is based upon Indian generosity, which countenances all special manifestation as a matter of course, but which is *de facto* animated by the whole power which personal volition evokes. In other words: the latest development of Occidental humanity leads to the same condition by stressing the value of the individual, as the disregard of the individual does among the Indians.

If the Western and Christian outlook upon life is ever animated by the spirit of metaphysical knowledge, then it may one day bring forth the most perfect life which here below is

theoretically conceivable. If Christian love until to-day has occasioned as much mischief as good, this is due to the fact that it still coincides too much with the natural feeling which implies the will-to-take rather than the will-to-give, and is almost identical with a wider form of egoism. If the Christian attitude to death seems on the whole less noble than the Buddhistic attitude, it is due to the fact that the emphasis is laid, not upon the sacrifice, but upon retention, upon compensation of suffering and a rediscovery in a better world of everything that has been lost. However, none of these views necessarily belongs to our attitude to life. What characterises our attitude essentially, independently of all time-limited concepts, is the stressing of the value of the individual and the assent to personal fate; these, however, animated by the spirit of true knowledge, could bring about a higher and fuller life than Indian detachment can. Even the Indians speak of the sacrifice which every one should bring: but what value has the surrender of that which we do not care for? The man who does not take life seriously finds its renunciation easy. But this not-taking-seriously proves, except in rare cases, lack of sincerity. We happen to be individuals, earthly, suffering beings, and we are related to this world with the whole of our empirical consciousness. We lie, therefore, when we assert that it means nothing to us; or if we do not lie, we reveal in most cases, not that we are superior to the world, but blunt and lacking in feeling. In any case, we evince a physiological incapacity for sacrifice. Only that kind of surrender which is not made with a view to greater gain, nor relates to that which has been recognised as worthless, can be regarded as sacrifice. It is only in the cheerful ability and wish to sacrifice that we have become 'entworden,' as Master Eckhart says, that we have put off our ego, and accordingly become practically one with God—and no attitude to life induces such real sacrifice more than that of Western Christianity. It makes possible in idea by far the freest attitude towards death. He who dies really gives away his life; for even if his soul continues to live—the man, in the shape in which he knows himself and is dear to others, is gone for ever. To die gladly in the full

consciousness of this fact, or to surrender a beloved creature willingly, literally involves the overcoming of death, for he who can give in this way—pure giving without wishing to take again—is thus beyond all nature. It is just the same with Christian love. It is decidedly better than despising oneself and the world to an equal degree to love one's neighbour as one loves oneself, be this only because every one does love himself. Only love, in order to imply an expression of metaphysical knowledge, must be pure giving, a process of sun-like radiation, a pouring out of warmth and light without reserve, intention or exclusiveness. Because love in the Christian world is not like that, but on the whole an expression of selfishness, it offers an uglier spectacle than the more indifferent love of the East. However, subject to progressive recognition, it can and must become so; the psychic body is there, only requires transfusion of spirit, and this is already beginning. Once this process has been perfected, then the divine light will possess a perfect medium in the Christian soul. Instead of shedding its radiance, as in India, only in the spiritual sphere, or in that of sensibility, as in Buddhistic Japan, or only, as in the West hitherto, pointing the direction for action, it will animate man in his entirety.

68

EASTWARD

I NOW traverse the continent in the hurrying train; the new world flies past me with the speed of the wind. And once more I perceive that time is merely a hindrance to the understanding of what is essential. The great outlines appear all the more clearly, the more the details are diffuse and indistinct.

America, in spite of the preliminary character of most of its phenomena, is decidedly nearer than Europe to the ideal condition towards which our latest evolution tends. I am not, of course, thinking of the man who boasts of his culture by declaring his ability to buy everything, who regards himself as the crown of creation—he is not important in any way, hardly

more genuine in his garment of European culture than the Anglicised Hindu; but I am thinking of the hard-working man of indifferent position, whose success is none too great on a large scale, and for whom the democratic outlook has really been devised. He is far superior to his transatlantic fellow. In America most of that is lacking which embitters and reduces the European who is born in an unfavourable position in life. Here the circumstances are such that every individual can hope to make his own way, and his courage and straightforwardness are thus strengthened; here circumstances offer him, on the other hand, the hard school which every immature individual needs by nature in order to gain the moral right to self-determination. And if a man rises considerably from small beginnings, he can appear as mature for his higher position as the one who is born into it, because disregard and fear of such a position are often the main hindrances to a rise of the soul which naturally follows an external improvement; and because, vice versa, genuine merit, joyfully recognised, influences self-consciousness in a similar manner to inherited nobility; for undoubtedly class barriers and class prejudice are a pure evil wherever they do not actually correspond to physiologically existing differences. Here, if anywhere, real culture will blossom one day from a democratic basis.

Thus, in America the view has already gained a footing to a high degree which must apply wherever modern development approaches its perfection: that all work is equally honourable. Of course, this is based at first upon *force majeure*, not upon higher insight, and for this reason it is not surprising that here, on the other hand, class prejudice prevails of a cruder kind than among us. But the combination of circumstances by which every one, absolutely dependent upon himself, must earn his bread, and can yet participate in the highest culture, and feel himself to be a kind of sovereign, necessarily involves the fact that, in the eyes of the American people, the execution of the lowest function does not preclude a man from being a gentleman, with the result that all work appears ennobled and the self-consciousness of those in the lowest position appears raised. Thus, the path to an ideal condition

has been embarked upon: if it is attained, then the truth that all externals are indifferent would have found its highest possible embodiment.[1] The Indians regard all externals as indifferent in the sense that all appearance seems equally worthless to them: it is undoubtedly more desirable to regard all appearance as equally valuable, and that is the direction in which American development is moving. Both attitudes signify the same metaphysically, because both cancel the empirical order of rank, but the latter gives significance to appearance—'the kingdom of heaven is realised upon earth'—whereas the former makes appearance completely hollow. The Oriental view of the indifference of all externals reduces those who are compelled to devote themselves to external activity, that is to say all the working classes, to the level of meaningless existence; the American view makes it possible for the most wretched coolie to feel himself as a complete human being and to act as such. Here, in the American type of workman, a form of progress seems to be realised which is more than progress in the usual sense: here we are concerned with a state of advancement, not merely in the sense of success, but, above all, in that of the possibility of higher perfection. If every external frame is considered as equally valuable, then the fatal character of mobility has been destroyed; then the passage through the various orders of life may bring the same inner culture with it which is otherwise obtainable only through remaining in the existing order. And this is already being achieved. No matter how much the 'cultured' American is still a barbarian, the simple people give a correspondingly greater effect of culture. The conductors with whom I conversed occasionally impressed me more than any Westerner has done for years.

Another direction in which America appears to be ahead of us in our own course is that here democracy does not necessarily involve the government of incompetence. Of course, it strives in this direction as if towards an ideal: labour unions already stigmatise those who do more than their fellow-work-

[1] I have developed this last train of thought in the Chapter 'Das Ziel' of *Schoepferische Erkenntniss*, in which I have tried to define in the concrete the forthcoming better world.

ers as unfair, and already, independently of the work done, equally high wages are demanded and occasionally obtained. But equally hopeless conditions do not await the new world for any length of time as they certainly await us. The growth of power of the lower strata in Europe is so pregnant with evil because even the most self-conscious and self-determined proletarian still clings to the traditional idea that it is the duty of the higher strata to look after him. This idea was sufficiently justified as long as there was no free contract between employers and employed, but a patriarchal relation or some other form of tutelage. As soon as the workman enters into the arena of an independent fighter the idea loses its basis, and leads, where it continues to live, to fatal consequences in the social organism. Among us the proletarians aspire to nothing less than the ruin of all prosperous people. Officially they also do this in America, but there they will not cause much mischief, because precisely the idea which conditions all mischief from within among us is lacking there: no one presupposes, as a matter of course, that the wealthy are obliged to provide for the poor; there the contract relation between employer and employed exists in its pure form; there every one expects everything only from himself, and the apparent class war is in reality a struggle of interests. America has the enormous advantage over us that there development took place from the beginning on an individualistic basis, whereas in the old world it is only very slowly tending towards it. Every emigrant who crossed the ocean worked solely for his own interest; he rejected the idea of doing so for others. But it was equally opposed to his pride to expect assistance from them. In a poor country this fundamental attitude would have led to distrustful bitterness in the long run. In wealthy America it has developed into an ever freer and more optimistic self-reliance, so that the feelings of envy and resentment are rare even to-day. The American does not presuppose that others have to care for him: this statement summarises the advantage which the new world has over the old. Only subject to this supposition can free competition lead to good results; a permanent order of society, in which every one has

equal rights, can be built on this basis alone. For only if every one is accorded the right to preserve his own interests without consideration of others can the rule of incompetence be evaded; only in this way is it possible for the idea of democracy to bring about an effective aristocracy.

Of course, the psychological factor by means of which the new order can alone be realised, is nothing but egoism: this explains the inferior condition of everything in America which presupposes higher syntheses than individuality. Humaneness in the profounder sense is seldom found among Americans, no matter how well-meaning and kindly and even helpful they usually are; it is rare that any one feels obliged inwardly to assist another, unless he happens to be a specialist in charitableness; the man who cannot work, well, he may die of hunger. But we must understand that this deficiency signifies the inevitable preliminary expression of a self-determination which is growing more firm, and that, regarded from the standpoint of a better future, it is humanly more valuable than all drivel about humaneness. On the basis of the morals of compassion an individualistic order of society is inconceivable; it can lead to good only where every one expects everything from himself and nothing from others. This fundamental attitude presupposes a complete transformation of the European soul, and until this has taken place the disadvantages rather than the advantages of the new position will obtrude themselves upon the observer. But here and there it is already completed, and then it offers a thoroughly satisfactory spectacle. Men who have passed unbroken through the cruel school of the American fight for existence are hard and elastic like steel; they possess an inner tension such as no one else can boast. But since they expect everything of themselves and nothing of others, they give all the more readily when they are noble-minded. Thus, humaneness, hitherto mere reinsurance, becomes a pure gift. It is not impossible that in America, after the wild-oats period has been passed, and after crass egoism has been tempered by life, the highest civilisation will flourish which can be conceived from the Western point of view, a highest civilization which seems conceivable only subject to

these particular historical premises: a purely individualistic civilisation, where no one expects anything from others, and where every one does everything he can for the community.

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THE railway now carries me through endless fields and pastures. I have never yet seen such extensive farming, and I have rarely seen it conducted more rationally. No farmer of Kansas seems to pursue sport in his agriculture, which the European still continues to do, whose management is frequently more expensive owing to his pleasure in his undertaking—he builds too magnificently, preserves what is unprofitable, he leaves fruitful soil fallow for æsthetic or sentimental considerations, etc.; but no one here seems practical in a petty way, penny wise, cunning in the short-sighted rustic's sense, reactionary from lack of enterprise; only what is unquestionably appropriate is done, and this is done thoroughly. And strange: these vast farms, which are nothing but organisations for purposes of making money, often present more beautiful landscapes than those of Northern Europe, to which so much love has been devoted. This is due to the fact that profitableness is not only the highest practical, but also the highest æsthetic principle of agriculture, and for this reason unpractical embellishment often seems ugly.

I am reminded of American farmers whom I have had an opportunity of overhearing in conversation in the course of my travels. Yes, they are men on an ample scale, and this is typical of them, whereas the same is true of us only exceptionally. They alone among farmers regard it as a matter of course that initiative is the best working capital, that far-sightedness, even at the expense of the obvious, is more profitable than the most keen-eyed short-sightedness. They are strong men, conscious of their purpose. But they lack all the moral qualities which ennoble so very much the farmer who lives on his inherited soil in countries of ancient culture. The heir of a nobleman's estate, the landed proprietor who is the offspring of a peasant family that has been living in the same place for generations regards his concern, even if he manages his farm in

accordance with the purest economic principles, as a matter of sentiment; he feels bound in duty to his property. If he improves his ploughed land and his meadows, this is done more for their sake than for his own; or, if he thinks of himself, he does not refer to his person but to his family. Thus, his activity has the profound background which the state of being rooted in the superindividual cohesion of nature alone supplies, and characteristics are trained in his being which express the consciousness of being rooted there, and these are the best qualities. This is why the profession of farming is regarded rightly as the noblest of all practical professions: it makes men more profound and more genuine than any other. In the United States this profession is regarded with equal justice merely as one industry among others; if agriculture means nothing but that money can be earned by it, then earning money exhausts its significance. Therefore, the American farmer does not stand on a higher human level than the industrialist does in the whole world, and this means that as a type he is completely superficial; he is a money-producing machine; in fact, he perhaps embodies the most unpleasant expression of the modern knighthood of industry, because one looks involuntarily in him for the traits which otherwise differentiate the farmer advantageously from the industrialist, and one is correspondingly horrified by the lack of them. And this makes me think back to China. What an overwhelming difference! If agriculture in America is one trade among others and in Europe a trade with a moral background, then in China it is the expression of morality pure and simple; there its material advantages hardly weigh in the balance. In China the individual belongs to the family, the family to the race, the race to the soil on which it lives; even the soil itself is not devoid of life, it is the earthly symbol of all the ancestors round whose gravestones the zigzag furrows of the plough are drawn. Regarded from the angle of material advantage, Chinese agriculture seems senseless; it implies an endless working at a loss. But it is not meant to be a means of profit: it is only intended to secure the normal activity for the moral nature of man. In fact, the Chinese owes his unique moral qualities to his farm. And if

one regards his method from this point of view, then it proves itself to be superior to that of the Americans. The latter makes men rich, but it makes them superficial and dry; the former merely continues misery, but it breeds superior men.

And yet, the American view of agriculture contains the seed for a higher condition than that which has ever been realised in countries with old civilisations: the condition in which consciousness of the profoundest relations of life seems no longer to be tied to a material substratum. The more freely and profoundly a man is self-conscious, the greater number of natural barriers can he deny without damaging his inner value. The highest man whom we can conceive is completely detached; he knows no geographical sentimentality, no preference for this or that custom, no prejudice against any calling; in fact, he knows no exclusiveness whatever in his feelings. And this does not mean, in his case, that he is cold and indifferent, but that he has attained a stage of inner culture where man can love as God loves, Who also does not countenance any differences. The tendency of all cultural development points in this direction. More and more does mind free itself from matter, in which it was originally involved; the individual appears less tied in every successive cultural stage. If this development took the place of exploding the old form after its new content has matured, then it would soar upwards in a straight line. But this does not happen, and for good reasons. For the new to develop, the old must decay, while the new exists only in the form of seed. For this reason, all external progress at first brings inner retrogression with it, all the more so the further the development of form precedes the development of content. This is the meaning of that progressive barbarisation, which is taking place just now in the white race. In our concentration on the new form we have lost the consciousness of its content altogether. But in a short while it will grow again, and then we will advance inwardly as well. For this reason we must not take it too tragically if agriculture, while becoming modern, is losing its educative power, if family ties become loosened, if professional and class idealism wane, and even if patriotism in days of peace appears to domi-

nate the popular soul less and less: it is a question everywhere of a decay of the form, so that a new content may be formed. If, on the one hand, the form, which has become solid, generally outlives its content, the new form on the other hand anticipates content; this results, however, in a most unpleasant state of transition. We are in the midst of such a state. We are more superficial than any other variety of man, more materially minded, meaner; these general characteristics of our time appear caricatured in America. But we are only more superficial because the profoundest in us has not yet grown into its new form, we seem more material because our spirituality still lacks the corresponding means of expression and we seem more mean because we do not know how to exploit our wealth. And the Americans only seem worse than we are because the tension between form and content is still greater in their case. But sooner or later this unsatisfactory stage will lie behind us. And this will happen soonest probably in the New World, because no energy need be wasted in fighting against the past and the inner content can be embodied in the new form without looking back.

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THE further I travel eastward, the more intensive does the cultivation appear, and the more autocratic is man in relation to nature; one might almost believe that he determines everything without being determined himself. He has anticipated the minor accidents of the weather by compensating measures (irrigation, draining, manuring), and he has obviated catastrophes by insurance. His ploughed field does not bear what it may, but what it should, his cows give more milk than nature intended, and the lack of human hands is replaced by machinery. And through the anticipated adaptation of his own production to the demands of the markets of the world, he has really taken root in the economic centre of the world, so that he can adjust himself to them and turn them to his advantage, whereas otherwise he would succumb to them as if to fate. My thoughts pursue these possibilities uncontrolled and I lose sight of them. Suddenly I discover that they have swung over

to the opposite pole of American life, to the condition which is rooted, not in creative activity, but in acceptance and suffering. And, as happens easily in such cases, I see this condition now in a purely favourable light. The specific culture which develops in places where man does not regard himself as superior to nature, but where, on the contrary, he feels subjected to a superior destiny, will never arise in America—and yet it embraces a great portion of the highest which mankind may adduce in its own favour. How noble is the pride of the son of the desert who believes himself to be completely dependent upon fate! How profound is the feeling for nature of the Indian, of the Russian peasant, both of whom regard themselves as the lowest elements in the universe! And how sublime was the effect of the same root consciousness in China! No: humility, modesty, the feeling of nothingness, do not mean something purely negative, as America imagines; they too can be the sources of a highest power. That is what they were during all the greatest periods of Christianity. I think of Bach's music: this depth, this power, is only revealed where man feels, not as the master, but as the servant; not essentially as a man of action, but as one to whom events occur. The attitude of consciousness which seems the only right one to the youngest wisdom of the West is, in truth, only one among many, and its advantages do not alter the fact that they preclude the experiences of a Laotse and of a St. Augustine, of a Bach and of a Luther, of a Tolstoy and of a Buddha.

The relativity of all manifestation! Every one is capable of expressing the greatest profundity, but none says everything, and no man says absolutely more than another apparently less valuable man does. Mighty things are effected by the consciousness of being at one with God: but no less creative is the belief in one's own baseness and wretchedness. Both views of the relation of man to God are empirically equally correct, or could at any rate be so. Consciousness of sin necessarily arises as the soul becomes profound, because the more clearly Atman is realised, the more also does personal insufficiency become clear; the man who identifies himself with his person, not with his super-personal self, must discover that it

is not he who acts, but that events happen to him, that he owes all progress to 'Divine Grace.' No form comprehends Atman in itself: all that matters is, how profoundly man realises himself in any form. Just as the mystics of Persia read sublime wisdom from the crude Suras of the Koran, just as the Iliad was a moral textbook to the Greeks, just as the chastest Christianity was never shocked by the most insidious passages in the Bible, so every form can become the means of expression of the highest. But in every one the highest is presented in a particular, exclusive and unique manner. The latest interpretation of Christianity will never make the older ones superfluous. Incurable invalids should never deny their disease; they get further spiritually by believing in tribulation. Adele Kamm would not have become a saint as a disciple of Christian Science; she would, on the contrary, have become hardened by fruitless opposition. The advantages of the Karma doctrine weigh against the disadvantage that all misfortune is interpreted as penance and therefore as an end, by which it loses its productive influence and strengthens the evil inclination in its adherents to see a deserved punishment in every misfortune of others. He who denies the positive in New Thought denies the positive character of evil and renders the beneficial effect which it produces when regarded as punishment, temptation or stimulus, quite impossible, and, moreover, does not do justice to the fact that it undoubtedly is not something absolutely negative: one man's evil always implies simultaneously the benefit of another, for nothing individual has its significance in itself, it derives it from the whole. Acceptance, endurance, passivity, all have a quality of absolute good. And they have proved themselves to be the only adequate inner attitude towards the processes of the world during critical times, in which catastrophes of nature, revolutions and wars annihilate all effects of individual volition, and in which fate tears asunder the whole order of humanity. For there is really a super-personal fate, whether one regards it as providence in the Christian sense, as racial Karma, or, in a more unbiased and more objective form, as Moira; there is a general cosmic necessity, the resultant of all that has ever happened, which

generally rules unnoticed, and often coincides with the result of human foresight, but which occasionally condenses itself into a sovereign personality and then pursues its own unrecognisable aims—and against Moira all protestations of self-determination are of no avail. And even if it were not so, even if the whole of the modern white race could become converted to American optimism, it would not bring about any absolute progress: it would only mean that at a certain time a certain manifestation would offer life the best opportunity, that the Hippos has followed the Hipparion; and it would simultaneously cause the extinction of that form of greatness which seems so uniquely worthy of veneration in Luther, St. Augustine and Bach.

The self-determined and self-conscious individual, like all types of perfection, does not include but excludes the others. Nevertheless, it is a good thing that it has become an ideal: for it relates the existence of every one to a profounder basis. Atman is creative spontaneity; the man who knows himself self-determined is more deeply rooted in Atman than one who feels himself to be dependent. When man changes himself from an essentially determined to a determining factor in nature, he traverses in the sphere of practical life the same path of evolution which leads the theist to mysticism. Empirically the one is as right as the other; God is experienced as 'Thou' or 'I,' according to the spot in which consciousness centres; but the man who experiences Him as 'I' experiences Him more profoundly. Thus, the autonomously determining individual is more directly rooted in being than the one who gives in and suffers. And that this is so is in this case not only proved by subjective feeling, as in that of the mystic, but by objective experience: this reveals that man is really destined to be the lord of creation. In our world Moira does not possess one thousandth part of the power over which it held sway among the Greeks, who gave way to their passions without inhibition, and who themselves created the forces which eventually destroyed them; we have made the elemental forces serve us to a large extent. If ever we gain equal mastery over ourselves, and exercise it with complete understanding, it may

happen that all pessimistic considerations will fall to the ground. For no suffering would seem fated any more; and man, externally master of nature, inwardly superior to all possible accidents, fully conscious of the meaning of good as well as evil, may himself assume the office of Providence.

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IN America my imagination roams inevitably into a better future. This proves how very appropriate the concept of progress is to this world. Here reflective consciousness has penetrated and seized the whole of life to such an extent that its peculiarity is dominant, its forms regulate activity, and its ideals have the effect of creative forces. What a power the spirit possesses over nature! In originality, versatility and inventiveness, the leading people of modern times are miles behind the old Greeks. But their development, no matter how far it led in many directions, did not take place in the sign of progress. Without direction and without inhibition they spent their gifts, as unfettered as Indian imagination, and after barely two centuries of glory they had come to their end; since then they have only rotted and decayed, no matter how much mental fermentation they continued to display. The modern nations have sown the seeds of their ideals systematically into the soil of life, in the assumption that progress is a fact, and this subordinates the physiological process, which is finite in itself, to the infinite mental process. Therefore, no reason can be adduced why the modern world should perish or cease to continue its development.

New and progressive humanity has been called to translate into progressive life whatever of the ideas of all ages can continue to be wholesome in effect. It is peculiarly fitted to achieve this translation in view of its special physiology, no matter how much it may fail in other directions. The Hellenic ideals are more real forces in our world than in that of the ancients; sooner or later the same will be true of the Indian outlook. To-day, of course, even the preliminary labours for the first beginning of what seems to be our destiny are hardly accomplished; the present conditions signify embryonic phases.

The man who devotes himself to them completely achieves little of lasting value. I personally belong to too old a civilisation to find satisfaction in what is preliminary; I could not storm Bastilles or fight behind barricades, because I know that such efforts have nothing essential at stake. To be a revolutionary or a pioneer, one must be blind. But where would we be if there were no blind? The phagocytes who battle against deadly microbes in our blood are certain to imagine that this war is a purpose in itself; and if they thought otherwise, no higher being could live. Those who have eyes to see have more reason than any one else to respect the blind, for it is to them that they owe the very possibility of existence; the man of understanding is possible only because millions of unreasonable creatures sacrifice themselves. A world in which their opinion dominates cannot, of course, please him, but what can he demand? *Nous n'avons pas le droit d'être fort difficiles*, Renan wrote already in his day. *Dans le passé, aux meilleures heures, nous n'avons été que tolérés. Cette tolérance, nous l'obtiendrons bien au moins de l'avenir. Un régime démocratique borné est, nous le savons, facilement vexatoire. Des gens d'esprit vivent cependant en Amerique, à condition de n'être pas trop exigeants. Noli me tangere est tout ce qu'il faut demander à la Démocratie. Et peut-être la vulgarité générale sera-t-elle un jour la condition du bonheur des élus.*

69

CHICAGO

My friendly feeling has gone. Chicago is awful. All life is given over to mechanical regulation to such an extent that even the visitor surrenders himself unconsciously to it out of fear of perishing otherwise. And his instinct does not err: the man who cannot, or will not, be an apparatus for a special function in Chicago, who is not ready to pledge the whole of his being to it, must perish.

I am profoundly depressed. I have nothing to say against making life mechanical: on the contrary, I wish that every-

thing that can be made mechanical would be made so as quickly and as perfectly as possible, so that the mind should have all the more power and leisure for what is above the mechanical; just as antique civilisation owed its high degree of perfection to the fact that slaves took away from the cultured all work which could be done without free initiative, so will modern civilisation only attain to a comparable level when machinery has lessened man's burden. What is so terrible in this world is the fact that life is exhausted in whatever can be made mechanical; here the tools enslave the man who should control them. How did this happen? Lack of population made it necessary at first to make mechanical everything that could be made mechanical; the profitableness of this method then concentrated all interests more and more upon itself, so that those things which were above mechanics seemed increasingly superfluous in life and receded ever further in consciousness. For unfortunately it is not true that a soulless existence cannot give a full consciousness of life; all the powers and intensity at a man's disposal can be expanded in machinery to such an extent that precisely the man who seems inexpressibly one-sided and pitiable to me feels himself to be an accomplished human being subjectively, and looks down upon the bloodless 'soul.' One cannot fairly accuse machinery of devitalising men in the biological sense: the men of Chicago are vital through and through, and they consider the conduct of their lives superior to all others for this very reason, because it enhances the consciousness of life as no other does. And it really does so because it compresses all existing forces into the narrowest channel of activity, with the result that they reach an extraordinary degree of intensity. American business men are real Yogis in so far as they concentrate the whole of their attention on one thing, and all the typical fruits of Yoga become theirs in principle: such as increase of vital power and vitality of feeling, increase of all capacities, and enlargement of the psychic working capital. What is so awful in Americanism is not that it devitalises men, but that it simplifies the psychic organism to an unheard-of degree. Americanism proves that a complete and full inner life can be lived without a soul, with-

out intellectual interests, without cultivated feelings. Of course this can be done; no lizard, no worm longs to get beyond his condition. When it is said that limited individuals are the happiest, this is another way of saying: it is much simpler within a narrow than within a wide frame to be conscious of the whole of one's life. But limitation does not embody an ideal; the only condition which could be called ideal is the one in which man became conscious of himself by means of the universe, from which he need not exclude anything to be altogether himself.

What is terrible in Americanism is that it makes man a pauper. Just as it reduces all values to the one of quantity, so it reduces the whole soul to one apparatus for the purpose of making money. It thus pushes man back to the level of the lowest animal. If one regards the facts in this light, Americanism seems something so awful that one might suppose it to be harmless. As a matter of fact, it possesses an enormous power of attraction, undoubtedly the greatest of its kind in our day. It possesses this power firstly because every one cares for success, and the American formula of life is most favourable to it; the man who loses no time with ideals, ideas and feelings, who does not know any mental and moral inhibitions, gets on the quickest. But this is not the chief of its powers of attraction: this depends upon the fact that in the American organisation even the meanest fellow becomes conscious of the fulness of his existence; this formula is so narrow, so limited, that it gives tension to every one's vitality. And this implies a fearful danger: to-day a low condition is held up to humanity as the highest ideal. If this ideal is not dethroned soon, it leads inevitably to barbarism, and not to temporary but permanent barbarism.

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I PAID a visit to the slaughter-house; it was not a pleasant undertaking. And yet I am glad I went: I will hardly ever see machinery functioning with greater perfection; in these stockyards the extreme conceivable limit of the exploitation of men and time seems to be attained. So little time is lost here that a

pig is despatched in some twenty minutes from life into a sausage, a sheep is dissected in twenty-six minutes, and an ox in thirty-five. Every workman does something definite at regulated intervals; every one does it in the best possible manner. Machinery transmits from man to man. In this way a single butcher can comfortably kill half a thousand pigs that rush past him in an hour, and everything else proceeds at a corresponding speed.

As I stood there and looked on, I remembered Djuang-Tse's parable of the butcher. Prince Wen Hui had a cook, who was dismembering an ox for him. He got hold of it, pushed with his shoulder, pressed with his foot, stemmed his knee against it: slish-slash! the skin was divided and the knife sizzled through the pieces of meat. Everything was done to a beat like a dancing song, and he always cut the joints accurately. Prince Wen Hui said: 'Excellent! That's what I call skill!' The cook put down the knife and replied, turning to the prince: 'It is significance (Tao) which thy servant loves. That is more than skill. When I began to cut animals to pieces, I only saw animals in front of me. After three years I had got so far that I no longer saw the animals undivided in front of me. To-day I rely altogether upon the mind and no more upon the semblance before me. I have given up the knowledge of the senses, and I act only by the stimulus of the spirit.' (After R. Wilhelm's translation.)—Yes, it is true, such skill possesses metaphysical significance: it shows that the movements of the hands are directly controlled by the principle of life; whether unity with life manifests itself in perfect slaughtering, perfect recognition or perfect being, depends upon the aim which a man sets himself. Even the butchers of Chicago, like the cook of Prince Wen Hui, must have surrendered themselves to the Tao to achieve something so remarkable. But it would be horrible if their kind of perfection should henceforth be regarded as the ideal of human development. The stockyards are a terrifying instructive image of what seems wrong in the aims of modern civilisation. The ideal relation between body and mind would be achieved were every expression of the soul to be shown as perfectly as in the acting of

Eleonora Duse. In our world it appears more and more that the whole power at our disposal overflows into one tool, with the result that while this tool achieves the incredible its owner ceases to exist. The modern man with a purpose embodies the precise opposite of the Indian sage: if the latter recedes altogether from external life in order to be all the more real in himself, the other renounces all inwardness in order to attain to extreme achievement in the outer world. To him we owe the marvel of technology, which is an unquestioned enrichment of this wandering star; to this extent we must countenance him. We must countenance him just as one countenances the fakir, the snake-charmer, the clown. But one must not look up to him. He lacks that which above all makes a man. . . . The spiral of historical evolution has led upon a heightened level to a reinstitution of slavery. Man is judged once more in accordance with his performance alone, once more he has only a market value, and this is true not only of compulsory labourers, but it applies to every one, for there are no free men in the Greek sense any longer; those among us who consider themselves most independent hardly regard themselves differently from the way a Phœnician regarded his prisoners of war. Will cannibalism revive? In our enlightened world there are undoubtedly fewer inhibitions of the soul to oppose this than among superstitious savages. What Rabindranath Tagore says is all too true: human flesh and the human soul have nowhere been so cheap as in the modern West. No civilisation has ever adopted so deprecatory an attitude towards the whole of creation as ours has done, exclusively intent as it is upon profit. If we abandon ourselves completely to the logic of this evolutionary tendency, then intellect, as it becomes unfolded, will strip mankind of its soul proportionately.

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Is not artificial man the ideal aim of the evolution which has attained its temporary zenith in the butchers of Chicago? Helmholtz used to say that he would show the optician to the door who made him so imperfect an apparatus as the lens of the human eye: in the same way it is conceivable that all objec-

tive performance could be executed better by some automaton than by a living organism, and in idea this substitution by something better can extend to the whole of man. Such an artificial product has once been conceived: it is Halady, the heroine of *Eve Future*, the visionary fiction of Villiers de l'Isle Adam. Villiers only fancied the possibility of creating an artificial human being in whom mechanisms of absolute precision were substituted for living organs; and behold, it followed necessarily that his lifeless automaton must excel in capacity the highest life. Where even the most gifted minds make mistakes, Halady was infallible; she reacted to every situation in the best possible manner, she answered with unfailing correctness, and always did, in given circumstances, what was most to the purpose, and so forth. She would have been God—if she had had a soul.

It is a fact, that progressive evolution necessarily tends towards two opposite aims, that of the automaton and that of God; and the path which is symbolised in the stockyards leads directly to the former. If performance is to mean everything and the soul nothing, then undoubtedly a perfect artificial man stands above the natural one. This consideration seems to be instructive. Our progressive evolution, which takes place essentially independently of inner progress, has its technical and psychological *raison d'être* in the progressive intellectualisation of the processes of life; this intellectualisation brings about a continuous materialisation of what was originally purely subjective. As man gains conceptual clarity concerning all that lives and happens within and without him, concerning its significance, and whither it could and should lead, he rises above it, sees it outside himself, his concepts give him the means to deal with it, and at the same time the power to control its direction. Then he may change his wishes into accomplished facts and his ideals into positive powers. Thus, love and justice have been rendered objective in the West in institutions, knowledge in technique, ability in organisations and factories. This process, if carried on to its extreme conceivable limit, would result in a complete objectification of all the forces of life, so that subjectivity would be out of the ques-

tion altogether, and all free strife would be anticipated by automata.

Halady, the ideal automaton, will hardly ever be created; but she embodies undoubtedly not only the labour ideal of every employer (one should think of the Taylor system!), but also the personal ideal of many a modern man who considers himself to be free. Such one-sidedness naturally evokes its complementary counter-action: thus, many—and they are not the worst—revere to-day as their ideal the Russian peasant, that primitive man, who seems absolutely incapable of any organisation, in whom no form of objectivity, not even that of the concept of duty, meets with understanding, who obeys exclusively his uncontrolled subjectivity. It would, however, be wiser to centre one's ideal neither in the automaton nor in the mujik, but in God: a being whose spiritualised soul would be superior to all intellectual objectivity, and controlled it from within in absolute liberty. Intellectualisation in itself is all to the good. Even if it temporarily disintegrates much that is of value—this very disintegration gives birth to what is more valuable still. For it is undoubtedly better to know clearly what one does than not to know. A higher consciousness necessarily brings about a higher world. What makes our phase of intellectualisation a curse is that, having become masters of external circumstances, we now have subjected ourselves to an objectivity created by ourselves. Soon we will rise above it, soon—it is to be hoped—we will recognise that our struggle for progress, if led by the spirit of knowledge, can lead, not to the unconsciousness of the automaton, but to omniscience.

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NEW YORK

A MODERN capital is very wonderful after all. We human beings have no longer any reason to admire ants and bees; what they accomplish by way of co-operation, we can accomplish too. We too are without question made for a collective

existence. For whom is loneliness appropriate? For the saint, the thinker; only occasionally for the artist; all the rest lead a much more complete life together than by themselves. There have been and there are many forms of society; every one displays specific advantages. The modern life in the great capitals suits the modern average man as no other does. Here the speed of life and opportunities, means and possibilities for satisfying them, necessities and what man can wish for, correspond really just as well as in the case of ants in their ant-hills.

I have never before found it so easy to find my way about a metropolis as in New York. The outer necessities of life are adjusted so perfectly that it seems one has only to want to be anywhere—and one is there already. Everything happens at a tremendous speed, and yet one does not experience any feeling of being rushed—at any rate, one is rushed less than in London or Berlin; one lives more rapidly, but this does not imply restlessness. Not only is no time lost: life is organised so well that one cannot lose time, and this consciousness gives to the soul adapted to the system the same peace as the feeling of having infinite periods of time in front of him does to the Indian.—This is *the* solution of the external problem of life, the only one which is in question for the Westerner. The Indian is inwardly more free than we are, because he does not pay any attention to the outer world; he is free at the expense of his power over it. We had to surrender our inward freedom temporarily in order to gain this power, and we did so to such an extent, and increasingly, that more and more voices arose who clamoured for 'return.' They forgot that a 'return' is biologically impossible, and would lead to destruction all the more quickly: once we have entered into relations with the outer world, we must renounce it or ourselves; our mentality as it has developed precludes the possibility, with rare exceptions, of Indian renunciation. Our path to freedom leads over conquered nature. And, in fact, where nature is really conquered the possibility of freedom appears automatically. This is proved by New York, proved by the whole of American life wherever it has found perfect expression. In America precisely the ideal of the Indians is attained by precisely the opposite

way. Life here in general, compared with that in Europe, is essentially simplified, although more importance is attached to comfort here than there, and although it is far more widespread: what is superfluous is eliminated as far as possible; what is essential is obtained by the most economical means; in the restaurants, for instance, one is hardly waited upon at all. Why?—Originally this was undoubtedly due to *force majeure*, the necessity of having to manage with few workers, and to obtain from them, consistently with the greatest possible respect for their wishes, the utmost conceivable profit; but now the régime of simplicity exists even where it might be avoided, because most people have grown accustomed to it and have realised that one can live without superfluous sumptuousness, and that on the whole one lives better in this way. Perfect organisation achieves just as much as a state with slaves. But whereas such a state demoralises its masters, the modern simplification of life, which satisfies all reasonable wishes but precludes a laxity at the expense of others, exercises a strengthening effect similar to that of asceticism.

This is, indeed, *the* solution of the eternal problem of life, the only one which is in question for us Westerners. Is our solution not the best absolutely? . . . I am reminded of another expression of the same relation, our concept of human dignity compared with the Indo-Russian idea of the unimportance of the individual: it is undoubtedly more desirable to feel the same respect for oneself and for others than to disregard both equally. Metaphysically, both attitudes signify the same; but ours alone lends appropriate expression to significance in appearance. Not only in the life of states, but in every life, the right to exist seems based upon the fact that it is guarded; not because might makes right, but because its psychological embodiment depends upon the determination guarding it. The man who does not respect himself gives himself up in the process—no matter whether any one is there to exploit the fact. For this reason, a progressive loss of dignity takes place among peoples who lack the consciousness of dignity, whereas those who respect themselves, no matter how crude originally, automatically progress inwardly; for the same reason, violent

Western humanity, and not the gentler one of Russia and India, have induced a general condition in which one can, in all seriousness, talk of generally accepted human rights.

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THIS city impresses me more and more. As far as the outer organisation of life is concerned, America, with its great centres, is undoubtedly at the head of mankind. A considerable amount of comfort is assured to every one without effort on his side, and this inevitably raises the level of life. Here workmen can make demands upon life as a matter of course which the European bourgeois would find extravagant. It is not merely that he lives and dresses himself better than the European, that he lives in better hygienic conditions: he regards it as a matter of course that he can satisfy his mental requirements to a degree which many a man in a higher position among us must deny himself. Prosperity is regarded as normal in America. This signifies something absolutely positive.

Why is it that just here, and only here so far, this solution of the problem of life has been found, which implies the absolutely best solution for us Westerners? Much has contributed to it: the natural wealth of the country, which rewards all struggle generously, the greater energy which is at man's disposal here, and many other considerations. But above all, no matter how strange this may sound, it has been due to religion. All the more important, though otherwise so different, forms of American Christianity agree in this one thing, that they regard material success upon earth as a tolerably accurate touchstone for the grace of God. The man who is pleasing to God must become rich; on the other hand, the man who does not wish to be rich does not put his talent to the exchanger, nor does he seriously labour for the honour of God; he who contents himself is regarded as feeble. To what extent such a view must stimulate religious natures, such as Americans of Anglo-Saxon extraction usually are, is obvious, all the more so as the ideal stimulus is given a very real background by the banks; they are all reinsured, as it were, by religious professions, and they gauge the amount of credit which they

give by the sect to which their clients belong, and by their religious zeal. American Christianity lacks every form of animosity against the wealthy. If Calvinism, compared with Lutherism, seems worldly from the beginning, then it has become even more so in America. At first it was said that one had to become rich, but only for the honour of God; one was not to enjoy one's wealth. From this, since something had to be done with one's possessions, the paradoxical capitalistic view developed according to which personal life was to serve impersonal capital. Slowly the Puritanical note disappeared; and the will to power, the desire to enjoy, became the admitted motive for gain more and more, even here. But the religious origin of the American attitude to possession can still be discerned clearly, the idea that divine blessedness and prosperity are connected is still effective to-day: it is expressed in the fact that prosperity is regarded as a normal condition, and it is appreciated, no matter how unconsciously, in exactly the same way as other sects value poverty and lowliness. It is not true that wealth means the *summum bonum* to the better Americans, no matter how much this may apply to many of them: it means the exponent of the best, which is something very different. No matter what he may understand by this highest: the grace of God, self-determined personality, or energy and daring pure and simple—prosperity seems to him the normal condition of God's elect, and this gives a spiritual background and a meaning to the struggle for earthly goods which rob it of all odium. Thus, the rich man is not hated but admired by the poor in America; thus, the man who has grown rich regards it as a matter of course to spend sums for the general good which would horrify every European who could afford to do the same.

It is very easy to find words of mockery concerning a philosophy which regards earthly and material success as a gauge of divine grace, be it only for the one reason that the structure of dogma which contains it can hardly bear the gentlest criticism. The physical resurrection of Jesus is not an unchallengeable pillar of faith. However it seems wiser to understand that the new version of the problem of the mutual relation of matter

and spirit implies a Copernican deed of such immense importance that its possible consequences cannot be estimated as yet. Ideals are not fixed, presupposed, and permanently existent: man places them into the world from within, and according to what and how he idealises, so does appearance receive a new meaning; the same phenomenon, according to the way it is understood, thus becomes the expression of the lowest or the highest. Until now, wealth was regarded as anti-spiritual or as spiritually neutral, which, in fact, is the most obvious attitude. It is anti-spiritual in so far as a struggle for earthly goods leads in the opposite direction as the struggle for inwardness and because possession of wealth facilitates a life of pleasure; it is spiritually neutral in so far as it certainly does not assist the life of the spirit from the outset, even if it does not hinder it. The higher religions have on the whole adopted a disapproving attitude to prosperity. This has been good either where poverty was a normal condition, as in the case of Northern Europe until recently, where all material aspiration was condemned to failure to begin with, or in those hot climes, where aspiration is opposed to nature. As soon as effort is generally accompanied by success, as soon as wealth appears as a generally attainable aim, wherever, moreover, struggle as such belongs to the national character, an unworldly view of life is derogatory. Since ninety-nine out of a hundred men prefer comfort to perfection, the continuance of ascetic ideals necessarily leads to a constant opposition between intimate volition and presupposed duty, which is a state of affairs inevitably followed by evil consequences. The man who abides by the traditional ideals has a bad conscience continually—which is the most undesirable thing which could happen to any one; the man who despairs of these ideals thus despairs of ideals altogether, and becomes a crass materialist; and he who doubts them but does not despair, acquires that fundamental trait of inward frailty which characterises the modern man of culture more than anything else; and all of them lack that idealism which alone leads up and on. What is to be done to evade this evil? Two ways, and no more, are open. The one consists in renouncing the struggle after material good, the other in sanctifying this

struggle. The first, which is preached and embarked upon again and again, does not lead to the goal and cannot lead there, because renunciation is unnatural to the Westerner; not one among a million of white men will choose poverty when wealth seems attainable. Therefore, only the other way remains. Western humanity has marched along this path already for a long time. Christianity has risen in a more worldly shape from every reform. If Catholicism permitted living in the world, although it regarded the monastic life as higher, Luther denied the monastic ideal and pronounced professional and married life as sanctified. Still, he did not preach struggle for success in the world, but contentment within the limits of the given position in life; he regarded suffering as higher than action. Calvin went further: he raised action above suffering, in fact he made this a duty; then, however, he hallowed—and this is the decisive factor—efficacy as the touchstone of the chosen. Thus, spiritual significance was awarded once and for all to success, and the breach between 'would' and 'should' seemed healed in principle. In point of fact, this healing did not take place so soon, because the rigid Biblical faith of the old Calvinism was opposed to it, and the decisive factor had not yet been sufficiently developed in the concepts of the older sects. This work was done by those that followed after, and especially the youngest are achieving this with most success. No matter how naïve, how crude, the concept of the Christian Scientist, and the various sects of New Thought may be in detail—these religious bodies have the immense merit that they definitely accomplish the embodiment of the spiritual ideal in temporal struggle, and in that simplest form which alone can influence the masses. If it is taught briefly and simply that the man who discovers Christ within him will become rich, healthy, an accomplished being in this life, then this doctrine may perhaps be open to criticism—but it undoubtedly has a good effect upon the masses; it teaches the possibility of uniting their struggle for the goods of this world with ideal aspirations. Hence the immense success of these doctrines, and, on the whole, their very beneficial influence. Nietzsche aimed in principle at the

same thing as New Thought, and his doctrines are more satisfying philosophically; most of the more recent philosophies, whether religious or a-religious, aspire to similar ends. But the American has the immeasurable advantage that it preserves the old concepts of faith, and only gives them a new meaning (this also applies to that of William James; it presupposes, perhaps without knowing it, the fundamental ideas of Neo-Christianity). It will never be possible to overcome Christianity in us; atavism more than a thousand years old is opposed to such a claim; all new ideas will have to be embodied in old forms more or less openly in order to attain far-reaching efficacy. The singular greatness of John Calvin's deed consists in having built the bridge between the modern spirit and the old concepts: it is the aim of all later religious communities to embody the modern spirit more and more in them. And that they are really on the right track is clear even to-day. Not only are there no happier and less problematical human beings than those who have been produced by these concepts—they are the most ideally minded; they above all are destined to give that spiritual content to modern life which on the whole it still lacks so very much.

America has progressed along this road already so far to-day that prosperity is regarded as the normal condition. Thus, an unquestioned advance has, practically and ideally, been achieved from the point of view of this world: if the general alternative is put of choosing between superfluity or indigence, then the former is to be preferred. No matter how much better frugality may be than dependence upon certain favourable conditions, and especially than suffering from discontentment—on the whole it is certain that the lack of desire is not beneficial to the sons of this earth, that the disposition to it is not a privilege, and, if forcibly acquired, rarely has good results. For the man who wants nothing is generally meanly endowed; every organ longs for occupation, every impulse for an opportunity of expression; the man who contents himself surrenders his possibilities of growth. And even worse; not only can most talents not unfold themselves freely in narrow circumstances, which impede the development of the noblest quali-

ties; a free, fully developed humanity has always flourished only upon the soil of contentment. Why? Because the requirements of nature, so long as they exist, cannot be made to evanesce by principles, because they have to be satisfied so that the spirit can attain to its freedom. If they are not satisfied, inhibition takes place, repression and auto-poisoning of the soul; what could have been perfected in beauty grows into an ugly malformation. Thus, repressed sensuousness inevitably leads to obscene images, embittered hurt leads to spiteful revenge; thus, poverty, painfully experienced, inevitably develops envy, ill-will and resentment. This, then, hallows materialism in our era: the way for a nobler life is actually prepared by striving consciously only for the best possible conditions of life for every one. The more satisfactory these conditions are, the less food there is for the ugly, the more there is for the noble. A general external condition is conceivable in which ill-will, mistrust and resentment, having become meaningless, will seem incapable of existence. To this extent, poverty can indeed be regarded as an absolute evil, and the struggle for wealth, according to the American Christian doctrine, as more pleasing in the sight of God than contentment with given conditions. The present unsatisfactory condition of white humanity is not due to the fact that it has needs, still less that it cannot satisfy them—on the contrary, no other human beings have lived in anything like equally advantageous conditions: it is due to the fact that contentment is not yet a matter of course to them. This unhappy transitional stage will soon have been overcome. Then, however, it will appear that the fruits, which hitherto have fallen only to the lot of him who renounces the world, can also be shared by him who affirms it, and that, no matter how little happiness can be regarded as the goal of human aspiration, it is yet the best means to its attainment.

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THERE can, however, be no doubt that in America the chasm between external progressiveness and inner perfection is even wider than in Europe. In the process of transplantation the old roots of the Europeans were mutilated and the newly formed

have not yet penetrated sufficiently deeply into the ground; also, in the main mass ungrafted plants were transplanted which, in the richer soil, without schooling have even lost in raciness: therefore, it is not surprising that higher civilisation corresponds to a lower level of culture. In the old world, too, perfection of institutions means little enough in relation to man. The objectification of ideal demands in institutions has, for all its advantages, brought about the disadvantage that they have lost in subjective efficacy. We are more superficial than the Indians, because the spiritual forces among us have been drawn towards the surface where they now function automatically without necessarily drawing the soul into co-operation, whereas, in the case of the Indians, the spiritual forces operate from the depths, and therefore, where they are vital at all, they influence the innermost being. But in the case of the European it still remains noticeable that the external has been derived from within. Take the most pronounced man-of-purpose: if he belongs to an old race, he possesses the humanism of our classics, the idealism of the age of discoveries, the high ethics of the Middle Ages, and, ultimately, classical culture as his living background; this, however, gives him a mental atmosphere and lends a significance to his actions which exists even when it escapes his consciousness completely. Thus, one feels the possibility of profundity through all European superficiality, in every mechanical organisation the possibility of animation by the soul; one has the same feeling, in the case of external institutions which do not directly point to inward content, that one has towards new organs which one does not as yet know how to employ: one feels that one cannot manage them yet, but that one will be able to ere long. Our history vouches for this. The Louvre vouches for the fact that the Eiffel Tower will one day be a living symbol, the cathedrals guarantee that factories will one day serve the spirit. One does not experience this comforting feeling in America. Most of its facts are nothing but facts without living significance and without a background.

This feeling is undoubtedly only justified with reservations: there is no difference of nature, but only of degree, between

American and European conditions. No matter how extravagantly the American universities have been equipped, they are wanting in mental atmosphere. The American show buildings are without symbolism, the Americans themselves are superficial to the point of soullessness, because the discrepancy between externals and internals, which also exists among us, is even greater. The Americans are inwardly more crude and more youthful than we are, and externally they have gone further: thus, the disadvantages of this unbalanced equilibrium are more obvious. This would be quite in order, and no word would be wasted on it, if the new world, instead of striving to emulate the old, did not run ahead and were not developing more and more into an example for it. This state of affairs causes anxious thought.

I recall to my mind all the positive and negative factors which I have observed in the United States, and the many comparisons between the East and the West which I have made, and the general trend of ideas which have become more and more precise in my consciousness in the course of my wanderings. It is high time that Western humanity should recognise that it will not find, upon the path of 'progress,' the 'one thing which is needful'; it only gains a more perfect means of expression for it. It is, of course, desirable that it should acquire this; nothing would be more foolish than wishing to deny it. When this has happened, however, the problem of life is not solved, but it arises in an unaltered shape. The only absolute ideal of individualised life is determined by the concept of perfection. Perfection is further removed from the most advanced modern individual than from any other being. He is further from it not merely than the Chinese, than the ancients and the men of the Middle Ages, he is further from it than the Australasian negro, and much further from it than every animal and every plant. As long as he does not see this, but remains subject to the illusion that, thanks to his 'progress,' he will get essentially further, no external gain will contribute to his inner welfare. His humanity will continue to grow more superficial and to shrivel up in proportion as his means increase. If, on the other hand, he recognises this,

and turns to the only true goal of humanity, then, but only then, what has hitherto been a calamity will turn out to be a blessing. It is not necessary that material power, evil as it is in itself, should hurt the soul, it is not true that intellectual force is destructive; the former can become the organ of divine goodness, the latter a means of spiritual regeneration. It is a mistake to think that the mobility of our life precludes its profundity, for all life is mobile; it is not true that our aspirations towards the unlimited make perfection impossible in principle, since perfection is confined to limits, for the limits of aspiration and those of the aspiring individual are two different things; every individual will find his limits quite early enough. From the point of view of the spirit, it is all the same whether a man has a solid or a fluid body. If only we get to the point of becoming perfect in our own way, if we can make the marvellously manifold manifestations of our body altogether the means of expression for the spirit, then we too will have reached our goal.

We must strive after perfection, after perfection alone. Not after 'renewal,' the pet solution of modern improvers of the world. To strive after renewal means expecting salvation from a new special manifestation—a new myth, a new form of life, a new type of man, who is to emanate from the old. But if one thing is certain it is this, that salvation cannot come any more from that quarter. The ideal of renewal means nothing but the extreme sublimation of the ideal of progress; it might help so long as man had not yet learned to perceive 'being' directly. In those days, the birth of a new form really meant the revelation of new content. Externally only 'progress' took place in the step from ancient heathenism to the faith of Christianity, but this process brought with it simultaneously 'perfection' in so far as the masses became much more profoundly conscious of themselves by this new inner form. Nevertheless, even then, conversion meant roughly what an auxiliary construction means in geometry; Marcus Aurelius, as he was, was no worse a man than St. Ambrose; he would not have gained by changing his faith; even then such a proceeding was of advantage only to the ignorant. To-day, however, most people

know much too much to gain by a change of form, too much to take a form so seriously that it can exercise its formative power to the full. If a spiritual genius should arise to-morrow who proclaimed the best possible religion, his action would not mean anything like as much as that of Luther; since men are beginning to be conscious of significance in itself, it becomes time for them to put the problem differently. It is no more a question of our placing new forms into the world, in order to realise ourselves more profoundly by their means, but of striving directly after the realisation of being, and this means: after giving expression to one's deepest and innermost content in any frame. If man strives after fulfilment, after perfection only, then the rest happens of its own accord. Then it is inevitable that, according to the circumstances, 'renewal' takes place as 'conversion,' or 'rebirth'; then the new historical manifestation will arise of its own accord if the time demands it. No matter how few in number may be consciously beyond name and form, unconsciously we are all beyond them; manifestation in itself can never be an ultimate aim to us any more.

We should strive after perfection, after perfection alone. As Westerners we are specific creatures of exclusive disposition, who must fulfil their special destiny. We will never escape from our physiological limits, it will never benefit us to be unfaithful to ourselves; every attempt to escape the barriers set for us by history can only do harm. We should not wish to destroy what we have created, nor undertake violent changes from theoretical considerations, but we should develop organically towards the condition which beckons to our special aspirations as its crowning reward. But we should, now that we have recognised that our empirical aim is no purpose in itself, and our peculiarity no absolute values, learn to live directly in and from being. Only then, but then with certainty, will 'progressiveness' lead to the expression of the 'one thing which is needful,' and thus become the advanced outpost upon the road to the goal of humanity. Then it will appear that, no matter how much misfortune we have brought upon this world, thanks to our mad struggle to subjugate the whole of creation

to our peculiarity, it is true, nevertheless, that we are destined to a high mission. For then, thanks to us, the unity of the whole of life, its indestructible essential cohesion, will be impressed upon the realm of appearances as never before. This impression India has never even attempted. The achievement of China, so admirable in other ways, failed because it countenanced only Chinamen as human beings. But as far as the aspirations towards the universality of the West are concerned, they broke down because, in spite of the correctness of their general tendency, they failed to make the right assumption from which general and special problems can be solved simultaneously. Those of later antiquity tended to eclecticism and syncretism; as Christians they subscribed to the delusion that one Church could embrace the whole of the human race; in the seventeenth century they took shape in the vague idea that all manifestations of thought and belief were manifestations of a single 'natural light,' which was equally innate in every one, and they ran dry in the eighteenth century in the shallow aspirations towards equality. We now possess the beginnings from which alone the particular can be determined by the whole; the objectification, which the mental forces experienced through us, has produced the only tenable connection between the world of ideas and that of appearances. Our recognition is objective; the connections which have been discovered between various phenomena exist independently of all opinion; the laws which we have discovered are valid in themselves; it is therefore possible henceforth that life will be understood and formed, not in accordance with a personal formula, but in accordance with its own meaning. Humanity has risen to a level of consciousness through us which necessarily towers above name and form. Thus the ground has been taken away for evermore from mental exclusiveness, and a general condition has been prepared in which everything single, however convinced it be in the pursuit of its particular aim, can yet recognise itself as a member of the whole. Even to-day it is possible for every one to gain certainty concerning the significance and importance of any appearances in their general connection, and consequently it is also virtually possible to assert oneself in this

general connection; even to-day a man need not reject what is alien in order to be unconcernedly himself. All this must ultimately lead to an enlargement unheard of in history of the basis of life, and simultaneously to an unprecedented profundity in each individual tendency of life. Previously, it was a question of either national feeling or world-citizenship, but soon the one will condition the other; the various types of culture and belief will learn to respect each other more and more as complementary; 'the other man or I' of earlier stages will be transmuted to an ever greater extent in conscious co-operation. And this will happen almost independently of all good-will, because life is a cohesive whole in itself, and the fact of having become conscious of a real relation inevitably involves an ever-enhanced representation of it in the realm of appearances, because objectivity grows into an ever-closer network of connections. In the form of knowledge, money, mutual economic dependency, the foundations are already there on which understanding is inevitable in principle; the same will soon be true of our concepts of right and law. Such objectivity reacts in its turn upon subjectivity. An ever-increasing number of the leading minds deny all natural or cultural exclusiveness, the feeling for unity among the working classes all over the world is growing more powerful daily; one blessed day the whole of humanity will wake up to feel its absolute solidarity, notwithstanding all necessary struggle and counter-struggle. To bring about this better world—not to Westernise the whole of creation—is the mission of us Westerners; our special physiology, our history destines us, of all men, to translate into life what so far the Indians have recognised most profoundly. But the formula of our life as such remains one among many, and even if we may believe that it is the happiest from the angle of the realisation of spirit, because on the one hand it demands the complete penetration of appearance by significance, and on the other because it permits in idea the most all-embracing manifestation, we must never forget that no phenomenon sums up the others, that no value exhausts all values, that no kind of perfection excludes the rest, that totality is the aim of all development, and that the individual can

never achieve more than his own perfection within narrow limits.

The symphony of the spirit upon earth should, in accordance with reasonable prevision, resound with ever-increasing beauty. The individual voices should make themselves heard ever more purely, harmonise ever better with each other, and be attuned to ever-fuller basic tones. The original chaotic and occasionally baroque, and then again essentially differentiated creation, should find its final expression in perfect classicism, in that monumental simplicity which contains all wealth within it. Change is the way of life, it has appeared different and new again and again. If its development were guided henceforth by an ever more profoundly self-conscious mind, then temporary forms must give way more and more to ultimate ones, and differentiation must slowly turn into integration.[1] However, reasonable expectations are not always fulfilled. The old Greek conception that the chief object of the gods was to eradicate everything noble upon earth, unfortunately does more justice to the nature of reality than the idea of Providence. A stupid accident may cut off evolution at any time, catastrophes, plagues or barbarians may rob the spirit again and again of its best bearers, and we may remain at the stage of attempts until the earth disappears. This planet has ever been the site of beginning, not of fulfilment. Towards the end of the Greek era the age of ultimate universality seemed to have begun, and barbarisation resulted; individualistic culture flourished in Greece, in Italy during the Renaissance, and it is flourishing again to-day, and just as the earlier suddenly died out, the same may happen again this time. The evolution of the spirit has no reliable means in this world, in which a thousand different and mutually inimical evolutionary tendencies cross one another. But the real aim of the spirit does not lie in this world. The infinite, which we try to express within the finite, escapes us eternally; perfection, to which everything alive strives as its highest fulfilment, is not fulfilment in the earthly

[1] I have treated this change of dimension, which is taking place even now in the world's evolution, at length in my lecture 'Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung (*der Leuchter*, 1924).

sense, for failure dogs us and death; no ideal was ever completely realised—if attainment within the limits of time and space were our goal, then all idealism would be senseless. But this is not so. The significance of idealism is grounded in another, more spiritual world, to which we belong more essentially than to this one, and all aspiration here below only serves to grow in spirit: on the way to the goal, which is an imaginary aim in the sense of time, that which is our very own becomes realised. We are told to want to found the kingdom of heaven upon earth; the more nearly we approach this end by overcoming material resistance, the mightier does the spirit become; the kingdom of heaven might possibly manifest itself completely upon the earth when it has been made perfect. But the perfection of the earth is not an end in itself: it is important to understand this, not to be unjust to reality. There is no doubt whatever that all life ends in death, that all perfection is perishable, short-lived and without a future, regarded from the temporal point of view. But time does not matter. In every perfect realisation of life the eternal becomes actualised, and that essential aim is attained for which development in time was only the means. To this extent one can say that progress in idea is more essential than real progress, although the former is realised only in the latter, and that it is not of intrinsic importance whether cosmic accidents permit full realisation to the spirit upon earth. We may believe Master Eckhart when he declares: 'If thou do not fail in intention, but only in capacity, verily! thou hast done all in the sight of God.'

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THE ship which bears me home to Europe is just passing the Statue of Liberty. To how many has this sight not promised a new and a better life! For how many millions does it not symbolise their ideal! I remember the conversations which I have had with emigrants: there was not one among them who was not filled with pride by the fact that he was a free American. . . . I cannot see anything ideal in the condition of the new world; it is not really more free than the old one. Not freedom so much as arbitrariness predominates in it—the arbi-

trariness, not of one, as in Asiatic despotism, but of every individual, which is not better. The universal franchise has recalled to life the right of physical might in a refined form: through playing upon moods and instincts, through suggestion and the mechanical result of clever intrigues, it is now being decided who is to govern, and this method of arriving at a decision differs from the method of the days of robber-knights, precisely as seduction differs from violation. The corruption and corruptibility of officials are not much rarer phenomena than in Russia. The 'will of the people' expresses itself on the whole as the rule of incompetence. The power which is not given to superior men has fallen to the lot of machines (trusts, the caucus, franchise organisations) and the assumption of the equality of every one, not only before God and the law, but before men, has lowered the general level to an extraordinary degree. Most of the advantages of America over Europe to which I have pointed in my observations exist at present only in idea. . . . And yet I too see a symbol in the Statue of Liberty: it signifies the first, however mistaken, embodiment of the political ideal.

Every man is essentially free; that is to say, his innermost being is subject only to his own determination. Of the two sinners who languished to death on either side of the cross, Jesus could promise paradise only to one, the one whose will met His half-way; He could not do anything for the other, who shut his heart against Him. No power from outside extends down to the deepest subjectivity. Thus, one has only really convinced him who does not merely give way to the pressure of suggestion, but who has chosen independently what one has pointed out to him; in this way one may well violate a woman, but never force her to willing surrender, and only he really possesses her to whom she gave herself of her own free will. This innermost, purely autonomous self is not, however, from the very start, the centre of the conscious personality: originally it exists only in the form of a germ, it develops gradually, grows slowly into the personality, and one cannot say that a man's life is actuated by inner freedom until this self has been fused with the centre of his personality. A young

soul reacts merely instinctively to outside influences; its real self is asleep, and when it wakes it lacks initiative. It cannot do more than say yes or no to what happens to it, and as such judgments emanate only exceptionally from recognition; where intellect is hardly existent, it has to be guided. At this stage, pure force, directed by insight, which disregards all intention and desire, is the best treatment. At a higher level force can be supplanted by the reaction of psychic ties—faith, prejudices, concepts of duty—and this reaction from the outside is accepted passively, but yet in conscious agreement. Here man experiences his being directly in the reflected image of objectivity which calls out his answers. On the highest level, which corresponds to the perfected birth of the self, man cannot recognise any external motive as ultimate. Here he knows that, whatever one might force him to, whatever he might do by instinct, nothing really happens through him so long as his free will does not take the initiative in the intelligent consciousness of what he wants himself; here he lives directly, not merely indirectly, at the instance of his own freedom. It is only at this stage that he is really free. He who has risen to this level no longer wants to force others, either to violate them or to influence them by suggestion, since the same applies intrinsically to all. His wish to influence others merely takes the form of guiding the freedom of every one to its own perfection. This process of development of the individual has its reflection in social life. The more developed a nation is, the more resistance does it offer to any purely external influence. Thus, all Governments see themselves compelled to take the will of those they rule more and more into account, and the wisest of them deliberately aim at educating the people to complete autonomy.

In the case of nations, just as in that of individuals, this process does not proceed along a straight course, but in the form of an agitated, frequently broken curve, whose lines sometimes point backwards, through periods of stagnation; and as men in process of growth are never clear as to what they really want, they commit mistakes. Thus the emancipation of the spirit has led first of all to the rejection of all inherited wisdom,

to immorality, positivism, nihilism—philosophies which are infinitely more foolish than those handed down from times of greater limitation. Thus the emancipation of nations, which leads to the deliberate destruction of the old order, which had grown up organically from cumulative experience, occasions at first more mischief than good. In both cases the same misunderstanding dominated: they thought that the *content* of the old laws and regulations was wrong, whereas, in point of fact, it was true and justified; what they had to change was merely the state of affairs which had been forced upon them externally; the developed individual wants to do of his own accord what the undeveloped individual has to be compelled to do. If the former does not require any prejudices, any dogmatic beliefs, any principles or concepts of duty, and actually lives without them, this is due to the fact that principles, dogmas and duties are the objectification of what the spirit wants profoundly and ultimately itself—and as such they are, of course, insufficient, because never exhaustive, never unchallengeable and always rigid and inflexible; the man who is free, however, lives directly and consciously from his inward being, where volition is the creative cause of all ideas of duty. It is true that the man who is perfectly free symbolises an ideal which in the course of history has been realised only on very rare occasions. The development of the soul does not begin by the growth of nature-like directness—man in his natural condition knows nothing of himself; but it happens that the objectivity which the mind produces from itself corresponds with increasing accuracy to the aspiration of the latter, just as the dissolution of objectivity also only succeeds stage by stage. The goal, however, is to get beyond all necessity of mediation everywhere, to live directly out of one's inmost depth, to concentrate one's consciousness in it so perfectly that the personal wishes reflect its forms of growth, that one can say with St. Paul: it is not I who live, but God lives in me. This is achieved only by him who has conquered his personality, who has become so profoundly inward that he finds his highest bliss, not in satisfied self-interest, but in sacrifice, in giving without wanting to take again, in God-like spontaneity.

The desire for freedom is awakened generally, as has been said, before recognition is ripe, before it is aware of what it means, how it is expressed, and this necessarily brings with it temporary coarsening and superficiality. The New World illustrates this state of things with terrifying clarity. The Americans have understood less than any one else that, if the barriers which were imposed from without are to be removed, this is not for the purpose of dispensing with barriers altogether, but that they must give way to others which have been chosen freely. They do not want it as yet to be true that the traditional orders among men, however conventional in detail, express realities; that differences in the age of the soul, in character, in talent, and even in inherited position, are something just as real as the differences between chemical elements, and that no God, as long as he remains in the sphere of nature, can act contrary to its laws; they want to be free without taking empirical reality into account. The consequence is that life, instead of becoming more self-determined in a wider frame, loses its autonomous nature progressively. In the most modern democracy actions are determined mechanically to a degree which never existed under ancient tyranny: there, at any rate, something living took the decision, good or evil; here accident decides, the force of circumstances, the conjunction of events; here life is absolutely dependent on inorganic forces, as the ignorant chemist is dependent on the 'sweet will' of his ingredients; if an explosive is compounded by his blind hands, he is blown up. But this experience had to be gone through. Only overpaid recognition is a permanent possession for humanity.

Some day or other, democracy will have been overcome. Then, however, it will be revealed, to the surprise of many, that humanity was conscious once more, in following its dark instincts ('in ihrem dunklen Drang'—Goethe), of being on the right track. That lack of outer barriers which conditions tyranny and barbarism in America to-day will grant to a humanity of the highest inward culture the corresponding frame of life. Humanity will have acquired so much knowledge by then that its attitude to the soul will not differ from

our attitude to nature. It will countenance psychic facts in exactly the same way as material ones; it will grant the man who inwardly is on a higher level the higher external position as a matter of course, without strife, well aware of the fact that it is just as senseless to decide a man's value by a majority vote as to decide the question of the existence of Selenium. Humanity will set its own limits, as a matter of course, wherever it needs them. Thus, imposed barriers will no longer be necessary. And then something surprising will happen: the idea which underlies democracy at its extreme will prove itself, not only true in principle, but demonstrable in appearance. What is its ultimate meaning? No other than that the spirit is more powerful than nature; that no natural limitation is insurmountable, that there is a divinely creative power in the soul of man. And this is really so. And if this is correct, if humanity will get so far one day that it can live entirely in the spirit, then it will no longer need to recognise any order of nature as unalterable; then what to-day is refuted by all facts will be found true. Those differences between men which I compared with those between chemical elements, do not really imply ultimate truths; tradition, talent and race are not insurmountable: it is possible to overcome them by the spirit. In single cases this has always happened. No race was ever responsible for the genius—the very greatest men were always accidents from the standpoint of nature, pure children of the spirit, just as no nature has ever produced a saint; a saint is, on the contrary, the result of the conquest of nature. To-day, however, this overcoming of nature is already taking place far and wide, and to a greater extent and in a higher degree than is supposed; and this contributes to the chaos of our time; even to-day the necessary connection between determination by nature and inner calling, which used to be so firm, has been loosened in principle. Only with the greatest uncertainty can one deduce a man's talents from his ancestry in the modern West; it seems progressively more easy to rise to any level from any natural basis. And that does not mean that one degenerates; it means, rather, that the spirit is gaining the victory over nature more and more. This overcoming

of original limitations takes place on the grandest scale, and it takes place correspondingly crudely and summarily in America, the melting-pot of races and traditions. The result so far is not one of general advantage, because most of those who want to get beyond their nature have attained to so little dominion over her that emancipation has stripped them of their best possibility of culture. That will change. The more spiritual we become, the more independent will we be of tradition. The miraculous effects of Yoga fall to the lot, not only of individuals, but also of groups and nations. Just as the Indians, in spite of their lesser genius, have gone further in self-recognition than we have, by absorbing themselves more profoundly in their being; just as the righteous will have no precedence at the gate of heaven over the sinner; just as it can happen to every one to be reborn in the spirit, an event which severs all the ties set up by physical birth: just so it may happen that precisely where humanity seems most deeply entangled in matter its vanguard will first get beyond all the bonds of nature. Yes, it will surely be like that: the spiritual part of man is strengthened in battle, and unfolds itself all the more completely and freely, the more resistance is overcome. Thus, our present materialism is verily the guarantee for our future spirituality. The suitable body for this has already been prepared in America of to-day. Humanity of to-morrow will undoubtedly live in an external condition which will resemble most closely that of the United States. It will not recognise any rigid forms, and will allow absolute self-determination to every one. It will, in rising above all nature, and in taking account only of what springs from the spirit, even realise the ideal of equality. In the United States the outer form has run far ahead of its content—which happens always where it does not lag behind. It corresponds less to the Americans than it would to the Chinese, the only people who have ever come close to the cultural ideal. Slowly, very slowly, the soul grows into its body. It takes longer than the reverse process, because, whereas the body must do what the soul wishes, the soul is not directly subject to the former's volition. If the soul, however, has developed as far as outer

form anticipated, then it possesses perfect means of expression. Then it appears to be without any inhibitions whatever. Then what democracy wrongly supposes will turn out to be true of the man of to-day. Then it will have been proved that the spirit is truly the master of nature. . . .

The Statue of Liberty disappears in the grey distance. Once more I float upon the endless sea. Yet a little while and I will be back again whence I set out. I will be back in that Europe which seemed so young to me when I contemplated it against the background of Asia, and which appeared so old when I compared it with what is going on in America, pregnant with our future.

PART NINE: HOME ONCE MORE

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RAYKÜLL

HOME once more. I feel as after a heavy storm at sea: as long as it lasts I can keep going, but as soon as I step on land the ground sways beneath me and I succeed only with difficulty in maintaining my equilibrium. In this way the outer world confuses me where it does not move about me any longer. I must see that I exchange the consciousness of the traveller as rapidly as possible for that of the resident. During my travels I have treated the outer world as a mere reaction; at home this is impossible. Wherever I surrender myself, I return to myself unchanged; wherever I look out, my own likeness looks me in the face; everything in Rayküll bears the stamp of my spirit or of that of my race. This oppresses me. It seems to me as if I were a captive. And so I am: here I will have to persevere in a particular form of existence; here I am responsible in a definite way; here I may not be Proteus. . . .

Of course, my natural being, my hereditary Adam, takes quite a different attitude to my return: he feels himself heightened like Antæus by the renewal of contact with the soil from which he sprang, in which he is rooted, and in which he is accustomed to act. It seems to him as if the progress made by Rayküll was his own progress, as if he himself had grown in the trees, as if his own nature had been improved by the irrigation of unfruitful moors. This may be granted to him—but what is happiness to me? My thoughts go back to the motives which drove me out into the wide world. At that time I went forth to escape the natural man. This aim I feel I have achieved. No matter how vital he has remained, he will never control me again, never again reach out beyond his sphere. There is hardly any danger any more for me that I will crystallise into a personality, or that I will take seriously any special manifestation inside or outside myself. I may therefore probably countenance nature in me henceforth with less concern. Only he who is not free entrenches himself against her or flees before her; the free man need exclude, need condemn nothing.

No doubt in future, when the transitional period has been overcome, a fuller personal life than I have led before awaits me. Only the transitional period. . . . In the beginning it will not be easy for me to give my conscious consent to living as a definite being. Proteus revolts against it. But must he too not learn to keep still. If I supported him within me above everything else, it was from fear of crystallisation: since this has been obviated he can no longer embody an ideal for me. It is now my business to reveal the same superiority in a durable manifestation as formerly in a changing one. External barriers oppress me still too easily. If I were quite free inwardly, then I would be no more afraid of ties and limitations than I would have need of them, then I would not feel such an imperious desire for external freedom. Much of that which seems free in me is in reality only a variety of bondage. I am still all too dependent upon my independence. I must be able to surrender myself at will completely to my particularised existence, to become completely one with a definite form, to control my inclinations, feelings and interests completely. I must get so far that I am not only unfettered by name and form, but can allow myself to be tied down at will.

But now to the main problem: have I come nearer to self-realisation on returning from my wanderings? I must be nearer to it. Every single possibility of life which I have experienced has made me more clearly conscious of what is essential in the metaphysical sense and what is not. I, as an individual, have remained the same, whether I experienced as an Indian or a Chinese, as a Christian or a Buddhist; I now know, from living experience, that the essential truth lives beyond the sphere of definite manifestation. It is a question of presupposition whether this or that form manifests itself; it depends upon the purpose one has set oneself whether one places a higher value on this one or the other. For the outer formation of life, for purposes of objective scientific recognition, the soul of the European is the most serviceable; an Indian, for realisation in the psychic sphere, a Chinese for rendering concrete an idea, a Japanese for the æsthetic understanding of nature, and so on. No formula is the highest in the metaphysical sense,

every one represents a possible expression of the absolute, every special expression involves specific limits. The various souls which I acquired have remained mine as possible attitudes of my own self; my nature has become correspondingly richer. Thanks to the recognition of the ways of metempsychosis, my being, which perseveres through all the transmigrations of the soul, has become clear to me as a photographic negative to such an extent that I think daily: the positive side must reveal itself even to-day. But it has not yet appeared. At the moment I do not feel more but less secure than heretofore. Too much in me is in the ferment of change and transposition. That will cease. The processes of nature take their course. They need much time. Let them have it. I, however, will wait in silent trust.

During these days I have played a good deal of Bach in the fine old hall with its magnificent acoustics. Why does his art mean so much to me? Because its spirit is throughout a spirit of keynotes and of basic tones. There is an intimate connection between the depth of thought and that of tone. Just as one profound thought controls from within a thousand superficial ones, so an infinite number of melodies can be conceived in higher keys of one single basic tone, whereas every given melody in the treble is related to only one in the bass. Modern music is entirely confined to the treble, and only lets one imagine basic tones indirectly: that of Bach is nothing but a single basic tone, and to this extent it is the foundation of all other music. No musician has ever been as deep as Bach; to the metaphysician he is therefore more congenial than any other. For the metaphysician has to play the bass in the symphony of the spirit of recognition, to find and sound the basic tones in the music of the world. And while I sink my soul in Bach a sigh escapes me: if only I could think as this man composed, if my recognition could mirror such depth as his music does, then I would have reached my goal.

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MY life flows on without event. But instead of rolling by more slowly, as heretofore, when every hour brought new im-

pressions, it moves on immeasurably more quickly. With the haste of the cinematograph one season follows upon another; if my journey seems to have lasted decades, I might feel now, at the expiration of a generation, as though I had only returned yesterday. . . . How wonderfully the soul adapts itself to circumstance! In the hustle of great towns, in the turmoil of events, in the chaos of impressions, its consciousness of time expands to give place to everything; in uniformity it shrivels up. In this way the hermit in the desert is not threatened with boredom any more than the man of the world.

And as I live on quietly, the remembered pictures of the wide world continue to pale. Already I can only recall India, China and Japan with difficulty. Once again everything happens differently from what I thought: I expected that the many forms of life which stimulated my mind so powerfully would continue to operate as such within me. Instead of that, they have been transmuted and what lives in me now is something different, something single, something very new to me, whose origin I can deduce only by reflection from multiple experience. It is incredible how unsuspecting man is concerning himself: the personal ego merely watches what takes place upon the stage of consciousness, it has no access to the wings, it does not know who will appear, whence the players come, what they will perform, and when it realises nevertheless that the play is its own creation, it sometimes makes it feel uncanny. . . . What is new and incredible to me is that I no longer have any desire for metamorphoses. Not that I regard the limitations of Hermann Keyserling differently from heretofore, or that I feel at one with them inwardly: they hardly limit me any longer; I know myself to be free in spite of and in them. I re-read the passages which I wrote before my departure: no, these motives apply no longer to-day. And I begin to understand why this is so.

One condemns most violently in others what one dislikes in oneself; the saint condemns no one, the sage regards no one as altogether foolish. Thus, my desire to deny all manifestation was mainly due to the fact that I was not independent of any. Being subject to impressions and influences to the high-

est degree, I preserved my liberty indirectly by constant change. But it is no doubt better to live directly in freedom. Character (in the usual sense) implies, of course, limitation; no developed individual can reverence 'personality' as an ideal; he is beyond prejudices, principles and dogmas. But he may yet be positive, without character, no less securely and firmly than any rigid individual, only from a basis of higher recognition. The Yogi says: neti neti—I am not that—to all nature, until he becomes one with Parabrahma. After that he denies nothing, he affirms everything positive within and without himself, because no manifestation limits him any more, because now each one is an obedient means of expression to him. In this sense a change of dimension has also taken place in my conscious life, no matter how far I may be from the goal. I need stimulus far less than before to feel myself alive, my progress becomes ever less dependent on experience; that which used only to answer now commands in me. But when I think back to the long road I have traversed, and ask whether I have wandered on unnecessary bypaths, I must answer in the negative more than ever. It is eternally true, as Indian wisdom teaches, that the soul must go through all experiences until it becomes ripe for the blessedness of knowledge, for there is no other way than this; he who attains his goal without apparent deviation attains it only seemingly. Why? Because the goal does not consist in external insight, but in inner change. To every level of existence a special truth corresponds; the butterfly's formula of life is not appropriate to the caterpillar; no matter how much the former may be the latter's aim—precisely in order to become a butterfly it must previously be a caterpillar and a cocoon. The same applies to the human soul. This unfolds itself in recognition: every higher recognition, however, presupposes a specific new state. Before this has been attained, no abstract knowledge is of any avail. He who turns the left cheek according to Jesus' direction, with fear and hatred in his heart, is not a saint; nature must have become equal to the ideal. This, however, is brought about only by experience. Every portion of the soul must have recognised individually what it really wants and what it really

should do, what its perfection consists in, for it does not recognise inexperienced truths, and in order to experience enough it must expose itself a great deal. For this reason, the richer a nature is, the more experience does it need correspondingly. For this reason, the by-way round the world means to man in every sense the shortest conceivable way to his essential being.

This much I had already realised before. But what has only been revealed to me lately and is the true reason why I can and will renounce the Protean ideal, is the fact that the recognition of being does not destroy but fulfils one's humanity. I knew, of course, that every manifestation is capable of bringing Atman to complete expression, but I thought that this applied to the consciously spiritualised man in the sense that nature would develop into a transparent shell without a meaning of its own. To-day I see that this is not so; that nature, on the contrary, develops into the living body of the spirit, and that the spirit is completely realised exactly in so far as it becomes expressed completely in its laws. If mutability is more than being fettered, perfect freedom can only begin beyond the former: it is possible to express, within a seemingly limited frame, what was inexpressible in the Protean one. Yes, *one* life is more than many, because complete experience is only possible in the one life which has been fully and willingly accepted. Christian mysticism has seen farther than the Indian, in so far as it differentiated between what God is in Himself, and what He appears to be, where He reveals Himself to man. He may be above everything which concerns creation—as man, He appears perfectly human. There is nothing human which could not find in Him its fulfilment and its sanctification. For this reason, divinity here below is conceivable only in correlative humanisation. And so it is. That form of divinity, of which I used to dream so much, is not a highest ideal; it means merely a spiritualised form of inhumanity. In striving after this condition I committed the very mistake which my theory has so often denounced. I preferred a particular manifestation as such to others. To-day I know the truth. And in saying yes with determination to what I happen to be, I do not feel more limited, but more free.

Time passes like a flash. The more immediately I live in the spirit, the more does time accomplish, but the more unreal does it seem to me. The Psalmist must have spoken the truth when he proclaimed of Jahveh: For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

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THE world war is raging all around me. More and more nations fall upon one another, their struggle becomes ever more appalling. And it is not enough that they attempt to destroy each other—mutually they defame and insult each other through the mouths of their intellectual leaders, inordinately, like the antagonistic heroes of Homer. All harmony, all understanding is abolished, the unity of mankind seems to exist no longer.

For me it continues. I see in this catastrophe only a crisis like many that have occurred already, if not of as wide a range, at any rate of the same significance; a crisis which does not cut short development, but quickens its progress. Just as all progress leads through periods of reaction, during which the lower and repressed impulses rise up and temporarily gain the victory, so it was to be expected that the more universal world of to-morrow would be introduced through a prelude of unprecedented national hatred, and that the future solidarity of nations would be preceded by wars of extermination; just so the era of peace which began with Augustus was initiated through the most cruel civil wars. During such crises, humanity offers a revolting spectacle. In earlier days I would have turned away from it in disgust. To-day I can do so no longer: I know that in my innermost being I participate in it. Not that I am a party to it—for me the whole living creation is one single whole; I do not share a single one of the one-sided feelings which inspire the combatants. But I cannot dissociate myself any more from the whole, I cannot say, as formerly: *nescio vos*. For I know that I am one with the whole of my time, and to this extent I share in the responsibility for its fate.

The more profoundly I took root in my freedom, the clearer

it became to me that nothing is more opposed to it than the desire for isolation, nay, that the recognition of essential freedom has its correlation in the feeling of one-ness with the whole of nature. As a metaphysical being I am, of course, my own creator. But regarded empirically, I am nothing at all by virtue of myself. I owe my talents and my point of departure in life to my parents, my earliest influences to my country; I owe to my age the mental content in which I share, the impulses which drive me on; and finally, I owe to the whole earth the manifold experiences which have made me what I am to-day. I myself, as a conscious person, may put down to my own merit only the fact that, assuming my existing energy for work, I have worked at myself unswervingly—its possession even is not due to myself, much less its success. It is not I who evoke my thoughts, they come to me. Thus I am inseparable from the universe. If I accept myself, I also affirm the universe; if it is my duty to perfect myself, this duty implies the further duty of co-operating as much as ever I can in the perfecting of the world.

I can deny what this world is to-day just as little as I can deny my personal condition. The latter is the product of all that has ever been; if the processes of the world had taken a different course, I too would be different. Conversely, however, the world would necessarily be more perfect if I were more perfect, so that its future character is conditioned on all sides by the volition and achievement of its present elements. And of all the elements without a single exception: even the transient gesture of every individual continues to be effective through æons of time. Thus, no one can or may sever himself from the whole.

This truth, of which only few are aware in peace days, inspires the impulses of most people during a war of defence. Every individual among the combatant nations to-day feels the desire to give his life for something greater, every one of them feels that he should join with his fellows, that he may not cut himself off, that he must share in the fate of his nation, be it crime or happiness or death. My consciousness lives beyond the sphere of national boundaries, therefore I cannot

be a party to this strife. But events touch me no less profoundly for all that: just as there are beings who must represent, according to their nature, certain special aspirations, so there are others who are destined to embody what is general and common to all. And this generality is no abstraction: it is a living entity, it is even more concrete than anything particular is, since the latter only serves it as a transient means. All the profoundest and most essential powers of life are super-individual and supernational! it is these which give significance and direction to particular events. The consciousness of the metaphysician is directly rooted in them. His participation in the processes of the world consists in lending expression to these powers.

And this participation is no less important than that of the warrior. What would have happened to Europe if the contending voices had not been drowned again and again by a single one, which could not countenance any partisanship and only knew of love? The profoundest will of humanity spoke through this voice. The more self-conscious humanity becomes, the more must this will dominate, the more will it animate from within all special aspirations. I anticipate a time when human power and courage will aspire no longer to temporarily limited, but only to final and general aims. For the ideal future will not be distinguished by the fact that colourless sufferance will take the place of heroism, but that heroism will serve truth instead of error; that all earthly powers will be directed throughout by the spirit of knowledge. Never will they cease to be effective as such. It is one and the same bravery which is evinced by the robber and by the confessor of faith, and weakness remains weakness, whatever its cause may be. As long as heroism and wide-heartedness appear as inevitable opposites, humanity will not be ripe for universality. It is not ripe for it yet. In order that it may become so soon, those few in whom a profounder consciousness is alive already to-day, must never tire in proclaiming their knowledge.

I am thinking of the Bodhisatva, who vowed not to enter Nirvana as long as one single soul was still pining unredeemed in his earthly fetters, and I compare his picture with

that of the sage who, indifferent to the world, only strives after the realisation of God: the sage is not altogether beyond name and form as yet, for, after shedding all fetters, he is still left with the one fetter of the impulse for recognition—it is *he* who wants to see God. The other, formerly also a sage, has discarded this last bond. His struggle for recognition, which was originally meant to satisfy his person, has finally burst its shell. Now he lives no longer in himself, now he offers to divine light a perfectly transparent medium. Because this light shines through him without any hindrance, he only wishes to give, he only shines and radiates, he knows no attitude to creation but that of a dispenser of grace, just as the sun cannot leave one single atom without its warmth.

The Bodhisatva says yes to the most evil world, for he knows himself to be one with it. Rid of himself, he feels his foundation in God, while his surface is intertwined with everything which exists. Thus he must love all beings as he loves himself, thus he cannot rest until every one mirrors divinity in everything. The Bodhisatva, not the sage, embodies the aim of human aspiration.

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